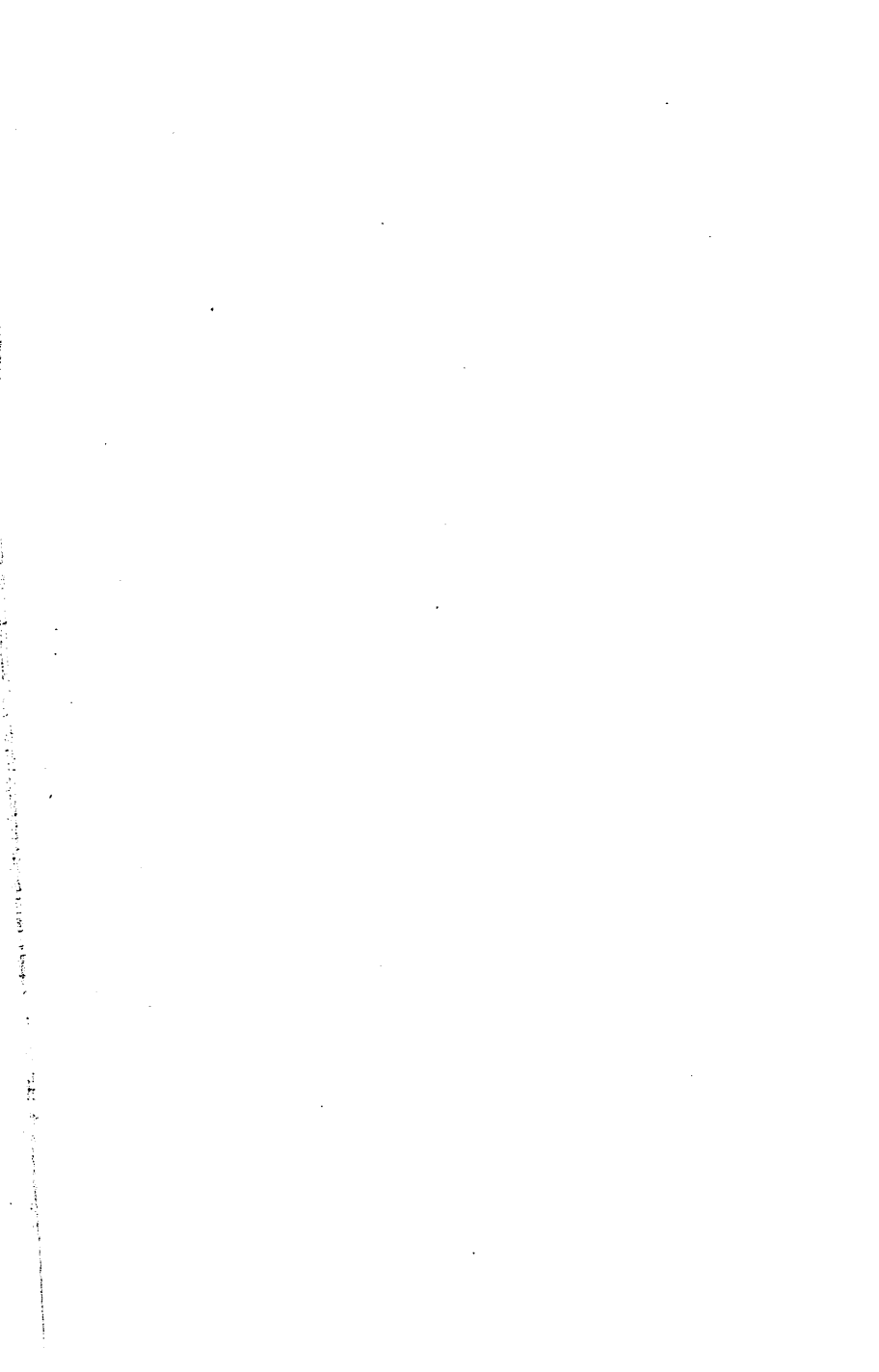


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THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

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The Acts of the Apostles

A Commentary

BY

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STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT PRESS
58 BLOOMSBURY STREET, LONDON, W.C.1

B53626
F5

First published, September 1934



PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY THE EDINBURGH PRESS, EDINBURGH

Div. (N.J.)

PREFACE

My heavy debt to the great commentary on the "Acts" entitled *The Beginnings of Christianity*, and edited in the early volumes by Drs. Lake and Foakes-Jackson, and in later volumes by Drs. Lake and Cadbury, will be clear from the index; I have found these volumes an almost inexhaustible treasury of illuminating information and ideas. In the twenty-seventh Chapter (Paul's shipwreck) I am greatly indebted to a little book which has disappeared from my shelves, but from which, many years ago, I took voluminous notes, by Captain Joseph Smith on *St. Paul's Voyage to Rome*.

I wish also to acknowledge gratefully the service rendered by one of my students, Mr. E. W. Rushforth, who drew the plan of Herod's Temple reproduced at the end of the book.

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NOTE

The Revised Version Text is employed by courtesy of the Delegates and Syndics of the Oxford and Cambridge University Presses.

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PART I

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

§ 1. “*The Gospel of the Holy Spirit*”

THE book we call “the Acts” is regarded by its author as a sequel to the Third Gospel. That the same writer produced both books there can be little doubt. The style and diction of both are quite distinctive, and the most careful analysis has never discovered any sign either in the structure of sentences or the choice of words that the two books did not come from the same hand. It is true that the style of the Acts is somewhat looser than that of the Gospel, and the choice of words less discriminating; perhaps the writer grew tired towards the end of his task. But we are not concerned with a different author, but the same author in a less painstaking mood. There is a perceptible difference, too, when he is using sources, as in the greater part of both books, and when he is writing freely (as in Luke i. 1–4 and the latter narrative part of the Acts (chaps. xvi.–xxviii.)), where his principal source is his own memory;¹ but these

¹ For passages taken from the author's own diary (the so-called “we-passages”), see § 9.

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differences are found in both books alike. Moreover, the leading interests of both books are the same. The Holy Spirit of God who descended upon Mary before the birth of Jesus, upon Jesus Himself at His baptism, now that He has risen and ascended, comes down upon His disciples; as the Spirit led Jesus to the Jordan to be baptized by John, to the wilderness to be tempted, and to Jerusalem to be crucified, so now the Spirit possesses first Peter and then Stephen, Philip, Paul, and sends them from Jerusalem to Samaria, from Samaria to Antioch, from Antioch to Greece and Rome. Peter and Paul are not indeed the heroes of the book, though they figure in it so prominently. We are not told how either of them won the martyr's crown; the Holy Spirit, incarnate first in Jesus, then in the Church, is its subject, and everything else is subordinate to this absorbing interest. But all the other characteristics of the Third Evangelist reappear in this book; his interest in women, his praise of voluntary poverty and appreciation of the temptations incurred by the possession of property, his stress on prayer and fasting, on praise and repentance, his dislike of crowds, his rich and vivid colouring and love of detail when telling a story, his emotional tenderness and ascetic rigour, all are here. Critics are by no means unanimous that the author of both books is Luke—this question will be discussed later—but whoever he may have been, they agree that the same hand and the same mind is at work in both from beginning to end.

Why was the Book written?

§ 2. *Why was the Book written?*

Like the Third Gospel, the Acts is addressed to "Theophilus." In the Acts (cf. Luke i. 1) he is no longer called "Most excellent"; the change may perhaps be taken as implying that the author was on better terms with "Theophilus" when he began his second book than he was when he took up his pen to write the first. Possibly in the meanwhile "Theophilus" had become a Christian; Christians did not address one another with such formal and complimentary titles. But at the beginning, like Felix and Festus, "Theophilus" is "Most excellent," that is, he either then held, or at some time had held, office under government; our nearest parallel to this title is "Right honourable." Probably "Theophilus" (which means "friend" or "lover" of God) was not his real name; it was perhaps not advisable in those days to dedicate an avowedly Christian book to a Roman official too openly. The author, it seems likely, was acquainted with him already; at least he was aware that he had received some information about Christianity (Luke i. 4), and that he would be glad to get more. The fact that both books are addressed to a member of the official classes suggests their principal object, which would, in any case, be clear enough from their contents; it was to convince the government of the Roman Empire that it had nothing to fear from the new religion. Three times over, it is shewn, first Jesus and then Paul are pronounced not guilty of civil misdemeanour, Jesus three times by Pilate (Luke xxiii. 4, 14, 22), Paul by Gallio,

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Festus, and Agrippa (Acts xviii. 14; xxvi. 31, 32); if Felix kept Paul in prison, it was because he was a notoriously corrupt governor, and had, moreover, a Jewish wife (Acts xxiv. 27); if Pilate delivered Jesus over to be crucified, and Herod imprisons Peter, it is only to please the Jews. Paul is a Roman citizen, going upon his lawful ways; the "Asiarchs" of Ephesus (Acts xix. 31)—they were the local representatives of the emperor at provincial festivals in his honour and were actually officials of that imperial religion which, forty years later, had become the blasphemous beast of the Apocalypse—are "friendly to him," and he appeals to Cæsar, sure that he will be fairly judged by the highest tribunal in the Empire. Dr Plooij has suggested (cf. also Still, *St Paul on Trial*, (S.C.M., 1923)) that Luke wrote the first draft of his two books to brief "Theophilus," so to say, for Paul's defence before Nero; that would explain the strange fact that Paul is left at the end of the Acts "in his own hired lodging," preaching to all who came to see him "without let or hindrance," awaiting his trial. Certainty is, of course, out of the question on a matter like this, but the theory is at least plausible, and accounts for facts otherwise hard to explain.

A secondary motive of the author was to shew that Paul was as truly an apostle as Peter. If Peter is delivered from prison, so is Paul; if Peter raises Tabitha, Paul raises Eutychus; if Peter rebukes Simon Magus, Paul silences "Elymas."¹ Even James "the Lord's brother" appears as a liberal at the Council of Jerusalem, and Peter and Paul are in perfect agree-

¹ For "Elymas," see Commentary, p. 131.

Leading Ideas of the Book

ment all the way through. Paul himself is ready to go out of his way to make concessions to Jewish scruples where it is possible, circumcising Timothy, for instance (Acts xvi. 3), though he is only half a Jew, and falling in readily with the plan to conciliate Pharisaic prejudice at Jerusalem (xxi. 23 ff.). All this makes Jewish responsibility for the death of Jesus and Jewish hatred of Paul stand out with greater impressiveness; everywhere Jews are the villains of the piece, and the book ends with a final condemnation of their obstinacy (xxviii. 26 ff.) and a solemn statement that salvation has now passed altogether from them to the Gentiles.

§ 3. *Leading Ideas of the Book*

We must ask now what were the author's religious motives, what really interested him in the story he had to tell, apart from the desirability of averting the suspicion of the Government, or explaining the fact that the Church was no longer a Jewish institution, or reconciling Jew and Gentile, partisans of Paul and of James, in the Church? There are two leading ideas which seem to dominate his thought. One of these is at least equally evident in the Gospel; it is that of predestined, supernatural movement and expansion. In the Gospel Jesus is seen moving towards His appointed destiny in Jerusalem; in the Acts the movement is continued in the Church's progress towards Rome. It is not an accident that in the first verse of the book we have the phrase "Jesus *began* both to do and to teach"; the great events of the

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“acceptable year” (Luke iv. 19) in Galilee were only a beginning; earth-shaking forces were set in motion when Jesus “gave command to the apostles whom He had chosen” (the “Western” text¹ of Acts i. 2). In the Gospel the last journey of Jesus to Jerusalem is made to begin very early (Luke ix. 51), and is introduced in words of exceptional solemnity; this is all the more surprising because in the same Gospel He is so slow in getting there. But it is not so strange if our author had heard from Mnason (Acts xxi. 16) and others who lived along the road and had accompanied Him on that fateful journey, of the awe they felt when they saw Jesus “set His face like a rock” to go to Jerusalem. When the author reflected that he, too, was accompanying Paul along the same road on a journey undertaken, like that of Jesus, against the entreaties of his friends (xxi. 12, 13) how could he fail to be impressed by the parallel? Is it in any way extraordinary that he should make the most of it? Neither Jesus nor Paul can be kept away from Jerusalem, though Jesus knows, and Paul suspects, that the journey will lead to death!

The other leading interest is the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. We must remember that Paul was an exceptional person; we have been too apt to regard him as representative of Christian thinking in the first age of the Church. This author is far nearer the common mind; that is one reason why the Acts is a priceless possession. Rom. viii. 9 ff. and explicit statements like 2 Cor. iii. 17, are enough to shew that Paul did not usually distinguish between “the Spirit of

¹ For the “Western” text of Acts, see below, § 12.

Leading Ideas of the Book

God," "the Spirit of Christ," and "the Holy Spirit," but it would seem that many other believers did. There would surely be a difference between the experience of those who had lived with Jesus in the days of His flesh and during the "forty days" between Resurrection and Ascension, and those who, like Paul, had not. To Peter and the others, whose standpoint our author gives us, Jesus as He had been in their company would be a concrete and ineffaceable memory. The Power which possessed them after Pentecost was superhuman; it came to them from Him, but it could not possibly be identified with His actual presence; it was different, and they had of necessity to find different language to express what it meant to them. So the beginnings of the doctrine of the Trinity are to be looked for, not in Paul so much as in the experience of those early days, before Paul had come on the scene. Something new—it was only later that Christian theology learned to say "Someone different"—had come upon them, something they had not known *in themselves* even in the company of Jesus; they looked forward to His coming back soon, but this had come already. Moreover, it was the common possession of them all, and in their minds was intimately associated with Baptism and Church membership. I suspect, though I cannot prove, that Paul's benediction (2 Cor. xiii. 14), like his cry "Maran atha" = "Our Lord, come" (1 Cor. xvi. 22), were echoes of those early days, when the presence of the Holy Spirit could be so entirely taken for granted that they could say "The Holy Spirit and we decided" (Acts xv. 28). Everything else in the book

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is indeed subordinate to this master-idea. Jesus Himself only appears at most three times in the story in His proper person, once at the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, again when His steps are turned almost forcibly from east to west, from Asia to Europe, by a series of memorable interventions (xvi. 7), and a third time when Paul tells us (xxii. 17 f.) of his vision in the Temple. It is significant that all these instances come in the life of Paul, when he is alone, and at decisive turning-points in his career. But on the whole Jesus remains in the background in this book, while the Holy Spirit is everywhere. We are not to look, it is suggested, for manifestations of God so much in the exceptional mystical and solitary experience as in the fellowship of believers.

§ 4. *Our Author as an Historian*

Enough will be said in the sequel of our author's treatment of his sources to shew that he cannot be called an historian in the modern sense of the word. But he is more like one than any other New Testament writer; he has a strong sense of historical development, and is, on the whole, more deeply interested in facts than in ideas. Whether he was a doctor in the professional sense of the word or not, he was certainly not a rationalist. We may, if we choose, say that there was no necessity for the apostles to speak all the languages of the empire at Pentecost, that what probably happened was that Peter and the others were able to talk intelligible Hellenistic Greek, since their hearers, from whatever quarter of the Roman

Our Author as an Historian

world they came, could understand it. There can be little doubt that the narrator believed that they were miraculously endowed, for that particular occasion, with the power to speak all kinds of foreign languages; Philip's daughters¹ would meet with no reluctance to believe when they told their stories of trances and visions, mysterious voices and winds, of shadows healing people, and so on. We may think that Ananias died of shock when Peter denounced him—though it is difficult to believe that Sapphira met with the same fate on the same afternoon—the writer quite clearly thinks that both died by the direct act of God. In contrast to the sober restraint of the Gospel, in which—as in the other Synoptic accounts—"signs and portents" are never ascribed to Jesus, and Jesus Himself tells us that there are no such things as particular judgements (Luke xiii. 1 ff.), the Acts abounds in wonders of this kind; it would seem that our author feels free to let himself go, and follow his bent. There is perhaps a perceptible descent from the Gospels to the Acts, but, after all, it is only natural that even after Pentecost the disciple should not be quite on a level with his Lord, and the author of the Acts faithfully represents the atmosphere of mingled fear and wonder in which the little company of believers passed those early days. He is honest, too; keen as he evidently is on the experiment in voluntary communism, which was, after all, merely a continuation on a widely extended scale of the life His twelve had been accustomed to live with Jesus, he

¹ For Philip's daughters, as possible "sources" in the Acts, see § 11.

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does not slur over the fact that there were difficulties and scandals connected with its working, like the behaviour of Ananias and Sapphira, and the complaints of the Greek-speaking widows that favour was being shewn to their Aramaic-speaking sisters (Acts vi. 1).

Serious charges have been made against our author's accuracy, based partly upon v. 36, 37, and we had better deal with that passage here. It is pointed out that Josephus, who was governor of Galilee at the time of the Jewish war with Rome, reports that Judas the Galilean led a revolt against Rome in A.D. 7 (the year of the census), and that Theudas was the leader of another rising in A.D. 44 (thirty-seven years afterwards). The order in Acts is Theudas, and, after this, Judas—a very bad blunder, if Gamaliel and Josephus are referring to the same Theudas. It is always a doubtful proceeding, in order to save an author's reputation for accuracy, to suggest that "there were two gentlemen of the same name"; the explanation is too easy. Various suggestions have been offered, none of which, it must be confessed, are very satisfactory. Dr A. C. Clark, by a clever manipulation and emendation of the text, manages to change the order of Acts from Theudas-Judas to Judas-Theudas, but, as Gamaliel spoke before A.D. 44, that does not help us very much. We must leave the matter an open question; at any rate, I am pretty sure that our author is not quoting Josephus, for he is quite independent of him in his story of the death of Herod Agrippa I in chap. xii.; if he were using Josephus, the date of Acts would have to be put very late in the First Century indeed.

Our Author as an Historian

One or two discrepancies with Paul's epistles remain to be noticed. In 2 Cor. xi. 32 Paul tells us that "the ethnarch of Aretas the king was watching the city of the Damascenes to arrest me"; on the other hand, in Acts ix. 24 it is stated that "the Jews watched the gates night and day" for him. This is probably only another example of our author's tendency to put the blame on the Jews every time. It has been conjectured that Aretas, the Arab sheikh whose daughter Herod Antipas divorced to marry Herodias, was in power in Damascus from A.D. 37 to A.D. 62, because no Roman coins have been found there dating from the years between A.D. 37 and 62, and that we may date the conversion of Paul not earlier than A.D. 35 on the basis of this fact. "But the argument from silence is particularly dangerous when applied to Roman coins in an outlying part of the empire in the First Century" (Lake). The word translated "was watching" means "was besieging"; the "ethnarch of Aretas," who controlled the territory outside the walls, but not inside the city, was watching the city-gates to catch Paul coming out; he had no power to arrest him, until he came out. So he watched the door, while Paul slipped out by the window! The Jews had nothing to do with it, however hostile they may have been to Paul before he left.

There is yet one more discrepancy—this time between Acts and the Epistle to the Galatians—that should be mentioned. Paul says that he went up to Jerusalem (Gal. i. 18) "three years" after his conversion, Acts that he did so "several days" after (ix. 23). This is not very serious, though it is difficult

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to lengthen out several days into three years. Moreover, Paul says that in the interval he "went off to Arabia," whereas Acts tells us that he "preached boldly in the synagogues of Damascus" (ix. 20). It has been suggested that Damascus was counted as part of Arabia at that period, but "went off" surely means "went away from Damascus." It may be worth mentioning that there is no justification for the idea, so beloved of the preacher, that Paul spent three years in retreat in Arabia; he probably did a good deal of preaching there; hence the annoyance of the sheikh who followed him back to Damascus.¹

In general, we must bear in mind that our author does not profess to give a complete biography of Paul, or even a comprehensive account of his missionary adventures. There are at least eleven years of his Christian history—after he left Jerusalem (Acts ix. 30; Gal. ii. 1) for Tarsus—about which we know absolutely nothing, but may conjecture that it was during those years that he was cut off by his people and "suffered the loss of all things." When we compare the story given in Acts with the list of Paul's sufferings in 2 Cor. xi. 23 ff., we find five scourgings by the Jews, two floggings by the Romans, three shipwrecks (the shipwreck on the way to Rome had not happened yet), and a night and a day spent in an open boat at sea, unaccounted for. The controversies that have arisen about the "Phrygo-Galatic region" (Acts xvi. 6)—if that is the correct translation—are due to the fact that, when our author is not in Paul's company, he has only room for a bare outline

¹ The "Galatian" problem is discussed on p. 165 (*n*).

Our Author as an Historian

of his journeys; when he is with him—as in the so-called “we-passages”—his fullness and accuracy are wonderful. He calls the magistrates of the cities of Asia Minor and Greece by their right names, and his precision has been vindicated over and over again by recent discoveries. For instance, he tells a story about Lystra—this is not in a “we-passage”—in which he informs us that there was a temple there in honour of Zeus, and that Barnabas was mistaken for Zeus, and Paul for Hermes, “because he did the talking.” Scholars have doubted whether Greek gods would be worshipped by these Lycaonians (cf. Acts xiv. 11), but Professor Calder, of Manchester, has discovered inscriptions in honour of Zeus and Hermes not very far from Lystra, and the accuracy of Acts has been vindicated. Here Luke is dealing with ground with which he is personally familiar. The question of the inscription to the “unknown god” at Athens we must leave to the commentary, for it is time that we began to sum up.

The picture given us in Acts of the city-life of Greece and Asia Minor in those days is true to life in every detail, and is painted with consummate skill. As in a series of moving pictures we are permitted to watch the crowds in the streets, to appreciate the outward liveliness and hidden misery of that restless world, and to say, “How like our own, and how unlike!” There they are, the turbulent Jews from the back-streets, so unpopular with their Gentile neighbours that any excuse is good enough for a scuffle, while the Roman Gallio turns his dainty nose away, lest the breath of the Ghetto should “come

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between the wind and his nobility." We see the mob at Ephesus shouting for two hours "Great Artemis of the Ephesians" to drown the voice of the Jew Alexander—the very sight and sound of a Jew an excuse for a riot—though "most of them had no idea why they had come out"; at last the town-clerk quietens them, partly by a few well-chosen words about the prestige of Ephesus, partly by dark hints that the Government might be hearing of the disturbance, and then there would be trouble. On the other hand, we have the fashionable lecturer Tyrannus who graciously allows or sells Paul the use of his lecture-hall during the hot hours when he does not require it himself, and the paid rhetorician Tertullus, whom the Jews hire to voice their grievances against Paul. His speech (xxiv. 2 ff.) which our author reports with glee, is a parody of the rhetoric of the age, beginning as it does with such high-flown compliments to Festus, and ending so lamely and suddenly. On the other side of the shield we have the picture of the quiet place of prayer at Philippi, where devout Gentile women gather by the riverside to read with the Jews their Scriptures. Evidently their unpopularity with city-mobs was not the only thing to be said about the Jews of that period as of this. Over and over again we hear of people like the Ethiopian eunuch and Cornelius, or "many women" of high social standing and noble idealism, revolted by the corruption of the paganism amid which they lived, haunting the synagogue and reading the Old Testament. Jewish jealousy and hatred of Paul was largely due to the fact that he was beating them in the race for

Our Author as an Historian

the conversion of these people. Turning to another aspect of the influence of the cleverest of all races, we hear of "strolling Jews," magicians and exorcists, who sold magic spells, and made extortionate profits, we may be sure, out of the superstitious *nouveaux riches*, of whom there were so many in towns like Corinth. It was an age, not characterised by deep religious life, but by a feverish religiosity; as there were no politics to speak of, sexual excitements, pseudo-intellectual and semi-religious cults clamoured for attention; blatant advertisement, senseless extravagance and miserable poverty flaunted themselves side by side. Petty rivalries between family and family, town and town, exhausted men's energies, while beneath the surface bitter disillusionment and a deep yearning for unattainable health and lost simplicity, became all the stronger because they found no outlet. Men and women were ready for anything that promised redemption from the prison-house of decay and death in which, in spite of all their luxuries and excitements, they knew they were confined.

All this our author brings out, not so much by description, as by a very happy selection of representative incidents and typical characters. Perhaps he is not quite so successful in his portraiture of the chief characters of the drama, as with the minor people who crowd the stage. We have vivid snapshots of Lydia, the Philippian gaoler, of Felix and Agrippa, of Tabitha, the sewing-meeting lady, of Cornelius and Simon Magus; we could bear to hear more of Timothy and Silas.

I confess to finding Peter somewhat disappointing

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in comparison with the human and lovably impetuous fisherman of the Gospels. His courage in denouncing the murderers of Jesus to their faces is superb, and his scorn of money ("Silver and gold have I none," . . . "thy money perish with thee!") quite in character, but there is little intimacy about his portrait, a lack of light and shade. There is, to be sure, one priceless story about him (chap. xii.), but even there he plays rather a passive part, and the best touch of nature comes at the end when, hearing that James the Lord's brother has taken control in his absence, he goes "to another place," burying himself so effectively that all the scholars in Europe have not been able to dig him out. Paul is much more lifelike, as we should expect, for our author obviously knew him better. His masterpiece of story-telling is the shipwreck scene in chap. xxvii., and here Paul is painted to the life. Specially attractive is his serene courage coupled with a very likeable tendency to say "I told you so," when his advice has been neglected with disastrous results. The same very human pleasure in quietly putting rude and overbearing people in their places is seen when he allows the magistrates at Philippi to beat him, and casually informs them afterwards that he is a Roman citizen! These officials were too ready with their lictors' rods, and should make inquiries before they order a beating for a man, simply because he is a Jew! The dialogue with Claudius Lysias at Jerusalem is in the same vein, though this time he does not let things get quite so far. Very true to life, too, is his encounter with the ruffianly high-priest Ananias. When Paul is slapped

Our Author as an Historian

by his orders, he answers angrily, "God shall smite thee, thou whitewashed wall!" (cf. Matt. xxiii. 27). His protest may not have been a model of meekness, but we respect him for it all the same. A man who could order a prisoner to be struck in the face when he is defending himself before the court was a bully and a cad, and deserved all he got. When shocked bystanders inform Paul that Ananias is "God's high-priest," and he must not talk to him like that, Paul answers "Brethren, I had no idea what he was, or I should not have done it." There is a sting here; no one would have thought Ananias was a high-priest to look at him! Paul's faculty for repartee, the nimble wit which dances and flames through Second Corinthians, is strikingly illustrated in his dialogue with Agrippa. Agrippa is getting a little tired of Paul's long discourse, and specially of his tendency to indulge in embarrassing personal application, and he says "In short"—to put the matter in a nutshell—"you want me—me!—to play Christian!" Paul answers promptly: "Yes; it is as you say; the short and the long of it is that I wish you were where I am"—then he remembers that he is in the dock, and courteously qualifies his statement—"of course I do not mean a prisoner like me."

Our author has given us a very convincing sketch of Paul as seen from the outside. It we are not permitted to see the gentler side of Paul's nature (except in his farewell speech in chap. xx.) that is only to be expected. He was himself, we should judge, of a somewhat feminine type of character, and the virility of his friend and hero would appeal to him very

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strongly. But we should never have dreamed that the portrait was incomplete, if it was not for Paul's own letters with their extraordinary self-revelations. Granted that the Acts gives us what is at best only a fragmentary record of Paul's adventures and sufferings, it gives us quite enough to stagger the imagination. We get from its pages an impression of exhaustless energy, mercurial vivacity, and superb courage. There are, it is true, two serious omissions, and both are suggestive. There is no hint either of the ill health that haunted and hindered Paul or of the darker moods that sometimes clouded his spirit; while he was in our author's company, Paul must have succeeded wonderfully well in concealing both. We miss also the beautiful tenderness and large-hearted tolerance of the later epistles. Apart from this, little fault can be found with our author's performance of a very difficult task.

§ 5. *Saul of Tarsus before and after his Conversion*

What sort of man emerges then from the hurried narrative which is all that the Acts of the Apostles can give us? Saul has been trained at a Greek university, and at the feet of the best-known Liberal Rabbi of his time. Like other enthusiastic young men, he is more fanatical than his teacher. Did he know Jesus in the days of His flesh? On that matter neither Paul himself in his epistles nor the author of the Acts gives us definite information. The probability, however, is that he did, for Gamaliel was teaching in Jerusalem at the time of the Passion, and

Saul of Tarsus before and after his Conversion

it is almost inconceivable that Saul could have been absent from the city at Passover-time during those years. He was probably the son of well-to-do parents, and apparently held some kind of official position under the Sanhedrin, though he was perhaps not yet a member of that body¹ at the time of the death of Stephen.

"I was a Pharisee," he is made to say in Acts xxvi. 5; that should be our starting-point. The essential idea underlying Pharisaic religion is to the effect that man's happiness and health depend absolutely upon obedience to the will of God in things great and small. That divine will was written down in black and white in the Book which we call the Old Testament, specially, but not solely, in the "law" of Moses. This "torah" it was the business of the "scribe" (or "Rabbi") to interpret and of the Pharisee to obey. The religion to which Saul of Tarsus gave his enthusiastic devotion was not a debased or even a merely formal orthodoxy; even while indignantly attacking the practice of Pharisaic scribes, Jesus (Matt. xxiii. 2) expressly approves of their general theory (see also Matt. v. 17). Saul of Tarsus was, then, already a keen member of a Church with a great tradition of a real experience of God.

If Saul was present at the trial and crucifixion of Jesus, what would he think about the demeanour of the Prisoner? He would be prejudiced against Him to start with, for he would certainly have heard that He was against torah and temple, a pestilent Galilean heretic. In spite of this prepossession, he could not

¹ See notes on the "Stephen" section in the Commentary.

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fail to be favourably impressed, but there was one damning fact; the Nazarene died upon a cross. The infallible word of God (Saul was, of course, what we should call a convinced fundamentalist) declared "Cursed is every one that hangs upon a tree" (Deut. xxi. 23; Gal. iii. 13); that in itself seemed to settle the issue. If Jesus had been, as He said, "the Son of God," God would never have allowed Him to die a death upon which God's word had set its curse; the very idea of a crucified "Son of God" was a "scandal" (1 Cor. i. 23), a shocking blasphemy, to Saul, as to every other non-Christian Jew. When, a few days later, he heard that it was being said that the Nazarene had risen from the dead, Saul would think of this as only another blasphemous delusion.

On the road to Damascus, according to Paul's own account (Acts xxvi. 14), Jesus said: "It is hard for thee to kick against the goad"; this implies that for some time at least Saul had not been easy in his mind about his persecution of the Church. Perhaps he was more deeply impressed by the demeanour of Jesus and of Stephen than he would confess even to himself. But with a nature so passionately loyal as his, such uneasiness could only lead to more feverish energy in defence of the faith which he would fain persuade himself had been sufficient for him, before these new disturbing influences had come into his life. In any case, these misgivings would seem to him high treason against God, and could only be atoned for by signal service. Our Lord's words "Everyone who kills you will think he is doing God service" (John xvi. 2) exactly fit Saul's case, and sufficiently explain why he

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became a persecutor. Unless he was prepared to jettison his belief in an infallible book, a belief which he had insight enough to see was central to his religion, no other course seemed to be open to him. But it was not really a case of logical reasoning; the whole force of his nature, the best part of him, rallied to the defence of his home-religion, associated as it was with all his experience of God. The position was, moreover, complicated by a fact of which Acts gives us no hint, but which is made clear to us in the seventh chapter of Romans; he was beginning to discover that his religion would not work, and to suspect that men who professed to obey the law of God perfectly were deceiving themselves and others. If all this is true, we need not be surprised that when he heard the voice of the crucified Nazarene from the sky, and knew that He who had died an accursed death had been vindicated and raised to God's right hand, he did not need much persuading; indeed, he was more than half won already. He never gave up his belief in the Old Testament; Jesus had died a cursed death, but the curse was ours, not His own.

So unprejudiced a critic as the late Lord Birkenhead has said that, set beside the achievement of Saul of Tarsus, the work of Alexander the Great or Napoleon fades into insignificance; it is indeed simply a fact of history that the soul that has kept the body of Western Christendom alive for more than eighteen hundred years was born from and has been maintained by the creative activity, in thought and deed, of this one man. And he was inspired by a personal devotion, not so much to ideas, much less to schemes of world-

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improvement—for he believed that the world was perishing—but to the crucified and risen Lord. All his sufferings were undergone not so much for any “cause,” not to win so many converts or found so many Churches, as in the hope that some day he might be able to look his Master in the face without shame. In the Acts we watch the outworking of the flame of passionate love for Jesus which burns through his letters. When he recovered his sight after the three days’ blindness which followed the vision on the road to Damascus, he did not go into retreat (Acts ix. 20), but “immediately” began work in the synagogue to such purpose that before long the Jews are plotting to make away with him. He escapes to Jerusalem, avoiding the Jews inside the walls of Damascus and the Arabs outside, and there too he is soon busy talking and arguing; again he cannot be ignored, and has to be sent away to Tarsus for safety. At Tarsus he disappears from the narrative and from our sight for eleven years. Probably during those years “from Jews” he “received forty stripes save one” (2 Cor. xi. 24), and suffered the loss of all things (Phil. iii. 8), being cut off by his own people and excommunicated from the synagogue. By the kind offices of Barnabas (Acts xi. 26) he emerges again, and in a little while we watch him setting off on his First Missionary Journey. Barnabas, the older and more experienced man, is nominally the leader, but not for long. In Acts xiii. 7 we read “Barnabas and Saul”; in xiii. 13 “those about Paul”; Barnabas has somehow altogether become submerged. Perhaps we need look no further to find an explanation of

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John Mark's desertion of the party. The accusation of cowardice so often brought against him is quite gratuitous; it is more reasonable to suppose that he was offended by the growing ascendancy of this new-comer Paul over his cousin Barnabas. The latter comes to the fore once more in xiv. 14, but Paul is obviously the storm-centre, for only he is stoned at Lystra (xiv. 19). He is left for dead, but picks himself up, and next day is off again with Barnabas for Derbe and more preaching.

It would be out of place in a brief sketch like this to follow Paul's adventures in detail through the Acts, but as chapter follows chapter our admiration for his tireless resourcefulness, quiet courage, and statesmanlike common sense deepens. He is so excitable and voluble that the people at Lystra at once label him "Hermes," while stately Barnabas receives the more distinguished name of "Zeus"; Paul, we are told, "was the leader in the talking." Paul was evidently mercurial in more senses than one; perhaps that was why they called him at Athens "that little cock-sparrow!" (xvii. 18). Several times our author mentions that Paul "spoke at great length" (see xx. 2, 9; xxviii. 23).

In his letters, as Dr C. H. Dodd has lately pointed out, we watch Paul's character deepening and mellowing; there is a patient serenity in the first nine chapters of Second Corinthians and in Philippians lacking in the angry letter (2 Cor. x.-xiii. 12) and in Galatians. The change seems to have come about during Paul's very critical three years at Ephesus; there, it is clear, he had a very bad time, was within an ace of being

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thrown to the lions (1 Cor. xv. 32), and at one time gave himself up for lost (2 Cor. i. 8). He emerged from that shattering experience, not perhaps a greater, certainly a gentler and more tolerant man. It is possible to trace the same kind of development in the Acts. The Paul whom we love best there is not the ardent young missionary who rebukes "Elymas,"¹ and quarrels with Barnabas over John Mark; it is the Paul of the later chapters, who bids farewell so movingly to his Ephesian friends, who appeals with such touching eagerness to Festus and Agrippa, the Paul of the shipwreck who, after his nerve-racking experience, is still ready to help make the fire which is to warm his shivering and starving shipmates. It is true that in "God shall smite thee, thou whitewashed wall!" we have a rather pleasing outburst of the old fire, but that well-deserved rebuke only increases our sense that this handcuffed prisoner, harried from pillar to post by time-serving officials, who only think him a nuisance, is the greatest gentleman of them all.

In our efforts to picture the kind of life Paul lived on his travels, we must be careful to get our perspective right. We are too apt to think that he moved about as a consciously great man, addressing large mass-meetings, aware that he is "turning the world upside down." As a matter of fact, the great world took little or no notice of anything that he said or did, and it is unlikely that he ever spoke to more than a hundred people at a time. At first sight the military officer in charge of the garrison in the Tower of Antonia at Jerusalem mistook him for an

¹ See note on this name, p. 131.

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“Egyptian” wanted by the police (xxi. 38), and he was surprised that he could talk intelligible Greek. Perhaps this does not reflect great credit upon the apostle’s appearance; we know from his own humorous confession that “his personality was not impressive, and his delivery beneath contempt” (2 Cor. x. 10). “We apostles,” he says in another place (1 Cor. iv. 13), “are like the rubbish in the street, everybody’s whipping-boys; so it has always been, and so it is still” (I quote from Dr A. S. Way’s translation). The Acts gives us abundant materials for the illustration of this vivid sentence. The meanest loungeur in the market-place of a Greek city could always find someone meaner than himself, and at the same time earn easy money by knocking about the Christian missionary. Perhaps even harder to bear than the insults of the hired hooligan was the pitying patronage of people of his own class; Festus can only conclude that Paul is mad; he cannot deny his education, and can only think him deranged to throw himself away on such a hopeless crusade as this.

We must remember that Paul was naturally the most sensitive of men, wincing at every insult, and that he had a strong sense of personal dignity. He was evidently not temperamentally free and easy; no one, so far as we know, ever called him by a nickname, though Apollos, Silas, Priscilla, all had their pet names, he was always a little aloof. The fact that, unlike Peter and James “the Lord’s brother,” he insisted on working for his living, suggests that he treasured his independence, and hated taking money. That a man as naturally proud and self-reliant as Paul was should

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ever become so accommodating that he could be reproached with being "all things to all men" was a miracle of grace.

§ 6. *The Pauline Churches*

What sort of people did Paul gather into his Churches? The Acts gives us materials for our answer to this question. Some of them were obviously of a relatively good social position; there was Dionysius the Areopagite; at Thessalonica there were "not a few of the leading women of the city" (xvii. 4). The women in the Church, we gather, tended to be of a higher social status than the men. Such women had already acquired the habit of attendance at the Jewish synagogue; they were ladies of high character and some culture, disgusted by the tone of pagan society, and ready for conversion to Judaism or Christianity, or indeed any way of life which did not revolt their finer instincts. Whether Priscilla—or Prisca, to call her by her formal name, which our author never uses and Paul only once (1 Cor. xvi. 19)—was herself a great Roman lady or merely a freedwoman of the "gens Prisca," who had taken the name of that ancient and honourable Roman house, she was clearly a person of some importance. The emperor Claudius "had," we read (xviii. 2), "ordered all Jews to depart from Rome"—there must be some exaggeration here, for that would have meant the deportation of thousands of people, and there were almost as many Jews as ever resident in Rome shortly afterwards—and among them Aquila and Priscilla. Suetonius, a

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pagan historian who wrote brief accounts of the chief events in the reigns of these early emperors, tells us that "Claudius banished Jews who were making disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus." "Chrestus" is probably only a mistaken spelling of the name "Christ" (pronounced "Chrest" in those days); Suetonius had heard the name in connexion with street-riots in Rome—probably riots of Jews against Christians—and came to the conclusion that "Christus" was one of the ringleaders! Only people of some importance would be banished, and, even though Priscilla, whose name nearly always precedes that of her husband in the New Testament, may not have been, as the late Dr Harnack used to say, the actual founder of the Church in Rome, as well as the author of the "Epistle to the Hebrews," she was a woman of strong character; we have Paul's evidence that she—along with her husband, who, however, is mentioned after her in this connexion (Rom. xvi. 4)—was able to save his life at great personal risk, probably at Ephesus. Then we think of Lydia at Philippi, perhaps Paul's first convert in Europe, who was able to entertain the missionaries (Acts xvi. 15); she was almost certainly a well-to-do business woman. We may suspect that women outnumbered men in the Pauline Churches, as they do in the Church to-day, and that the middle-class provided them with the majority of their members. What a strange medley the little Church at Philippi must have seemed! It was obviously the best-beloved of all his Churches. Lydia, the slave-girl who had told fortunes, the town-gaoler, Euodia and Syntyche! (Phil. iv. 2).

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If Philippi gave Paul more joy, Corinth certainly caused him more trouble than any of his Churches. Our author gives us a very vivid picture of Paul's strategy at Corinth, specially if we follow the "Western" text¹ at this point. It reads (xviii. 4) "He went to the synagogue every sabbath-day, and putting in the name of Jesus, sought to persuade Jews and Greeks"; in other words, Paul interrupted the speaker, intervening with the name of Jesus at appropriate points in the reading of the lesson or the preaching of the sermon; "Jesus is Lord" he would cry. One cannot help feeling that justice has not been done to the synagogue-authorities; they were broad-minded enough to allow a visitor to the town first to make interruptions, and then to address the meeting! After all, whatever Paul says about himself, or critics at Corinth said about him, he must have been a most persuasive person! He soon split the meeting, and at Corinth set up a rival conventicle next door, leaving Priscilla and Aquila to carry on the work in the synagogue (xviii. 7). The result was that the synagogue officials themselves, Crispus and, apparently also Sosthenes (Acts xviii. 8, 17; 1 Cor. i. 1), were converted. The founding of this Church was clearly one of the dramatic successes of Paul's life.

§ 7. *Jew and Gentile in the Church*

The most difficult problem by which Paul was faced in the administration of the Churches he had founded was that of the relations between Jewish and Gentile

¹ On the "Western" text, see below, § 12.

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believers; a modern parallel to it might be found in the colour-question as it affects, for instance, Churches in the southern states of North America. Jews could not enter into full Christian fellowship with Gentiles without ceasing to be, in the religious sense of the word, Jews, that is, without breaking the food-laws which were an integral part of Judaism. If they were to join in the common meals of the Church, either Jews must become, to all intents and purposes, Gentiles, or Gentiles Jews. Modern Bible-readers often do not appreciate the strength of the Jewish-Christian case. Jesus had been a law-abiding Jew; though He had eaten with publicans, there was no evidence that He had ever done so with Gentiles. The little circle of disciples in Jerusalem lived as Jesus had done, and for some time saw no reason why they should alter their habits.

It was a very great step forward when Peter went to the house of Cornelius and shared his table. It should be clearly understood that Peter felt no qualms about preaching to Gentiles—strict Jews preached to Gentiles continually and laboured for their conversion to Judaism—what he needed a vision to persuade him to do was to eat with a Gentile. From that moment he ceased to be what he always had been, a loyal son of his mother-Church. We need not be surprised that other Jewish Christians had serious doubts about this action. In regard to the difference of opinion between Peter and Paul at Antioch, of which Paul gives us an account from his own point of view in Gal. ii. 12 ff., but which the Acts ignores, it is only fair to say that a strong case might be made for Peter. He

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had already made his position absolutely clear by eating with Gentiles at Cæsarea and Antioch; surely, when his own people, who were not yet prepared to go as far as he himself had done, came along, he had a perfect right to "be all things to all men," and keep his place in both camps! Paul, it is true, was much farther-sighted, for the barrier between Jews and Gentiles could never be broken down, if there was to be, as it were, a high and a low table in every Church where Jews and Gentiles were to be found. All the same, we can see that Peter had a case, even though he was too forbearing to press it.

There was, moreover, a further complication involved. All parties were agreed that the Old Testament was the holy book of the new religion; at that time the Churches had no other. The Church was thought of as the second Israel, the "Israel of God" (Gal. vi. 16). But in this sacred book both a food-law and circumcision were prescribed for God's people; why should the Messianic prophecies, taken as referring to Christ and His Church, be accepted, and *the law* which was also an integral part of the same Old Testament, be ignored? This position was never fully met until the Epistle to the Hebrews was written; meanwhile it was at least arguable that believers should come into the Church, so to speak, via the Old Testament.

This division in the Church was one of Paul's great concerns, and our author is right in emphasising the fact that Paul was willing to go a long way to meet Jewish scruples and hesitations. But would he have gone so far as to submit to the decree of the

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Council of Jerusalem, and actually to recommend its adoption to his Gentile Churches (xvi. 4)? Surely not, if it contained a food-law, for that would have been to give away the whole position for which he was fighting a life and death battle in these very Churches! We must infer that there could not have been a food-law in the original text of xv. 20, 29, and that the "Western" text¹ is right in its omission of "things strangled," and its interpretation of "blood" as meaning "the taking of life" generally, so making the resolutions refer only to moral, not ceremonial or dietary regulations.²

Paul was well aware that there was real ground for uneasiness about the ethical standard attained by some members of his Churches; all his epistles, but specially those to the Corinthians, bear witness to this fact. He could have no hesitation in accepting directions to abstain from idolatry, fornication, the taking of human life; he could not, without stultifying himself, have accepted any reference to abstinence from meat that had not been killed in the orthodox Jewish way. If we accept, as I am sure we must, the "Western" reading here, there is no serious discrepancy between the account given of his position in Acts and his own statements. The question as to whether Gentile Christians should be circumcised was really secondary though important, as Paul's epistles shew; the fundamental issue was "On what terms are Jewish and Gentile Christians to associate in the Church of Christ?" We know from his letters

¹ See p. 141.

² For the "decree," see further, p. 141.

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that Paul spent a great deal of time and energy in making a collection in his Churches for the benefit of Christians in Judæa, and from the Acts how anxious he was to take the collection, when completed, to Jerusalem; in spite of the dissuasions of his friends, he actually did so. The tragic fact was that it was his very anxiety to heal the breach by a great gesture of this kind that led to the termination of his ministry and to his journey as a prisoner to Rome which ended in his death. It is no exaggeration to say that Paul died a martyr to the cause of Christian reunion. There is no cause so well worth dying for, now as then.

In fairness to the Jewish Christians, it ought to be said that there is no evidence in Epistles or Acts that the Church at Jerusalem intrigued against Paul. The "mischief-makers" (Phil. iii. 2) whom he denounces so strongly in his epistles were not Christians at all, though they masqueraded as such. They were "false brethren, who had no standing in the Church" (Gal. ii. 4). The Church at Jerusalem would have been enormously strong, as well as incredibly unscrupulous, if it could have sent its emissaries all over the world to undo Paul's work and undermine his influence, nor would Paul have praised "the Churches of Judæa" as he did (1 Thess. ii. 14), if they were busy carrying on a campaign against him. Paul claims Peter as being in substantial agreement with him in Gal. ii. 16, and only charges him with inconsistency, not with opposition. If the testimony of the Acts can be trusted—and I see no reason for doubting it—James, the Lord's brother, was also an

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influential supporter of Paul's Gentile mission. Opposition came from Jews outside the Church, who pretended to be Christians, and perhaps original disciples of Jesus, for "even Satan can masquerade as an angel of light" (2 Cor. xi. 14). It is time that this constantly repeated libel against the Church at Jerusalem was exposed; here the author to the Acts has given us the true facts.¹

But the authorities of that Church may, all the same, have been uneasy, and consequently somewhat hesitating in their support of Paul. Here was what we should call a mass-movement of converts from paganism of the most revolting type (see 1 Cor. vi. 16) into the Church, and there might well seem to be a serious danger of a lowering of the moral standard which had been the glory of those early days. It was a real danger, and Paul himself was only too conscious of it. These anxious souls would not dream of assaulting the doctrine of justification by faith, but they could only accept it with reservations expressed or understood. It seems to me quite likely that James the Lord's brother did, as the Epistle that goes by his name suggests (Jas. ii. 14 ff.), emphasise in a very outspoken way the other side of the case. But upon the whole the fact that Peter and James—the latter was obviously more conservative than Peter—were willing to go as far as they evidently did in support of Paul—he must have been a trying person to keep up with at times—reflects great credit on all three of them. In this matter again—that of the relations

¹ I am indebted here to the late Dr J. H. Ropes' *Singular Problem of the Epistle to the Galatians*.

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between Peter, Paul, and James, the Lord's brother—the Acts paints for us a less one-sided picture than we should have if we possessed Paul's epistles only. The kind of Christianity represented by the First Gospel in a broad sense and the Epistle of James in a narrower sense, though so different from that represented by the writings of Paul, is also *genuinely* Christian; we go wrong when we set up one against the other, and say, "Not this, but that." The whole New Testament represents all the points of view that have vindicated themselves in the history of the Church since, in their purest form. Friend of Paul as he was, we shall never appreciate the Acts properly, until we recognise that its author has more points of contact with the Epistle General of James than he has with the Epistle to the Romans.

§ 8. *Miracle in the Acts*

The question of miracle figures so prominently in this book that it is impossible to ignore it, but it is interesting to notice that, when the author appears on the scene—that is, in the "we-passages"¹—the narrative becomes much more matter-of-fact. The only supernatural happening in the latter part of the book is the raising of Eutychus; Paul's shaking off of the viper at Malta and his healing of the governor of the island might perhaps be called "miracles," but they are not in the same category as the raising of the dead or the healing of the sick by the passing of Peter's shadow. The extraordinary events which are so frequent in the first half of the book suggest to us,

¹ See below, § 9.

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as no cooler history could have done, the atmosphere in which those early disciples lived. What is true of the Gospel "miracles" is also true here; those who told the stories at least sincerely believed that they happened as they described them. There was a supernatural power at work in the Church as there was in Jesus, and consequently anything might happen. We can, if we choose, suggest ingenious explanations of these incidents, but they are generally wasted labour. Jesus was the kind of person about whom it was natural to believe wonderful things; if those who saw them happen were challenged by a sceptic, they would have replied: "Oh, but you should have seen Him!" There is no answering this argument. The same thing is true about miracles in the Acts. Supernatural power, it was believed, had come down upon the little company of believers from their risen and ascended Lord—"power" in the New Testament always means supernatural power—and they were ready to believe in "signs and wonders." If the signs and wonders—as in the case of the sudden deaths of Ananias and his wife—are not always as edifying as the Gospel miracles, that was because the power was working through men inferior to Jesus Himself; that the power was working I have no doubt whatever, though I do not believe that it manifested itself in the execution of summary judgements upon such people as Ananias and Sapphira. The point is that the power was there, and everything that happened of an extraordinary nature was put down to it. I also believe that, given the same sense of the reality of God actually at work in the world in the modern

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Church, miracles would happen, that is, incidents would take place which cannot be accounted for by any known natural processes or psychological laws. But in that case, we should not expect the miracles to take the same form, because we no longer believe that some of the wonders narrated in the Acts are things that the God of Jesus would do.

There is no sufficient reason, my conclusion would be, for doubting that Peter was able to make himself miraculously understood at Pentecost, that Ananias and Sapphira died suddenly, that people were healed by Peter's shadow or contact with Paul's working-clothes, that Tabitha and Eutychus were raised from what was believed to be death; how and why these strange things happened I cannot tell, and I do not feel bound to accept our author's interpretation of their meaning.

It should further be noticed that all the "miracles" in the Acts, except the sudden deaths of Ananias and Sapphira, are works of healing. The Gospels shew us that the God whom Jesus revealed was anxious to save men from all pain—whether of body, mind, or spirit—which was not borne for others. Whatever was the origin of such pain, it did not come from the Father of Jesus. That does not mean that even pain which a man or woman is forced to bear may not produce good results—one has met too many cases of saints made perfect by suffering to doubt this—but that, in itself, thwarting and disabling pain is always and everywhere an evil thing. God can turn evil into good; that does not make it inherently less evil. Jesus did not distinguish between body and

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soul as we are apt to do; He came to save men, not merely men's souls. So He healed the body, set free the mind from its fears, in exactly the same way as He pronounced forgiveness of sin. God was in Him destroying "the works of the devil."

The second thing that seems worth saying is that medical research has made such special healing by what we call miraculous means less necessary than it was then. Christian doctors are carrying on one part of the work of Jesus as truly as Christian ministers, and the knowledge that has come to us is a revelation of God's grace; to refuse to use such knowledge when it is available for us is sinful. We cannot expect miraculous help, when we refuse to use the help God has already put in our way. But the fact that other ways of treating disease beside prayer and faith have been revealed to us does not mean that religion has nothing whatever to do with the healing of disease. We do not say "God can come in when the doctors fail"; what we can say is that God is at work everywhere, in the laboratories and hospitals as well as in the Churches. If He puts medical treatment in our way, and it succeeds, *He* is healing us; if He chooses to heal us by more direct means, opening a way of cure by another door in response to faith and prayer when the first door seems closed, that also is His doing. If we are not healed—and Paul's experience (2 Cor. xii. 7 ff.) in regard to his "stake in the flesh" should warn us that even believing is not always effective *in the way we expect*—that is not because God wants us to suffer, but because there are hindrances in the way of which we know nothing.

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The essential fact is that when Jesus becomes real to a man—still more when that man can share his experience with a *company* of men and women—"miracles"—that is, events which do not happen in normal life, in which the sense of the real presence of God in Jesus is not strongly felt—*invariably* happen. In an unbelieving world they are out of the question, in an only-half-believing Church they are rare, because, in all His dealings with this world of free personal spirits, God has limited Himself, and cannot do things for us, unless He can also do them, in some sense, *with* us. When Jesus came into their lives, people whose faith in God—and that means faith in life—was dead or dying, were able to believe in themselves and one another, because they were able to believe in the God whom Jesus brought with Him. After the Ascension, though Jesus was no longer with the company of believers in the old way, they still had with them the power which had come into their lives with Him; only it was no longer merely a case of their *watching Him doing* these wonderful things; they discovered that they could *do them themselves*. Jesus had been *with* them; now He was *in* them; the mere repetition of His name (Acts iii. 16) was sufficient, not merely to give them the assurance to bid the lame walk, but so infected the cripple to whom they spoke that he, too, was emboldened to try. The name of Jesus probably meant something to the lame man at the Beautiful Gate; almost certainly he had seen Jesus Himself; but in any case the wonderful thing was that it had precisely the same effect as the actual presence of Jesus a little while before had produced.

Was the Author Luke the Physician?

Has the age of miracles ceased, then? There is no reason to think that it has. The miracles of the New Testament are not to be regarded merely as a temporary device to secure belief in the early days of Christianity, before it had secured a firm footing in the world; still less must we confine God to the unintelligible, or suggest that only where there is something we call "miracle," because we cannot explain it, is God at work. He is at work everywhere and always, and always in the same way; that is He works not by magic, but always through man, so far as human life is concerned. There may be "ministering spirits" around us, but they can do nothing for us unless we are ready to be helped; even Jesus did not appear after His Resurrection to any of His enemies except to Saul, who in his heart was no longer an enemy, and He "could do no act of supernatural power at Nazareth, because of their unbelief" (Mark vi. 5). What we must do then is not to try experiments, but to realise the living presence of our Lord; then wonderful things, some things we shall understand and some things we shall not understand, will begin to happen; the form they take may not correspond closely to the pattern of those early days, but they will be unmistakable proofs, as those were, that God is at work in His Church and in the world.

§ 9. *Was the Author Luke the Physician?*

Luke "the beloved physician"—that is, "my doctor," "the only doctor I ever consult"—was, we know from Col. iv. 14, a companion of Paul in his

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imprisonment at Ephesus, Cæsarea, or Rome—opinions differ as to the place from which the “Epistles of the Imprisonment” were sent—and this is borne out by Philem. 24 and 2 Tim. iv. 11. We must ask two questions then in any discussion of the authorship of this book; they are: “Was the author or final editor of Luke-Acts a doctor?” and “Are there signs in the book itself that he was an intimate friend of Paul?” Many years ago, Dr Hobart found traces of authorship by a doctor in almost every other verse of the Third Gospel and the Acts; undoubtedly he overstated his case, but, when all allowances have been made, there seems to be evidence enough to make it certain that the author was specially interested in disease and its treatment, and probable that he himself was a doctor; striking examples in support of this proposition will be quoted in the notes on the actual text.

The other question is more difficult to answer. The author of these books shews, it is true, no special interest in or comprehension of the doctrines which we have learned to call “Pauline,” though Acts xiii. 38 looks like an effort to bring out one of them. On the whole, however, so far as the Acts is concerned, Peter and Paul deal with the same topics in their missionary preaching. In most of Paul’s speeches no special emphasis is laid upon the Cross, upon justification by faith, or union with Christ, and some scholars have found it hard to believe that one of Paul’s inner circle of companions could have been so insensitive to the message which they think was specially his. This difficulty is mitigated, if we give

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due weight to the fact that in his earliest extant letter (1 Thess. i. 9) Paul himself summarises the chief topics of his missionary preaching to Gentiles—they are monotheism, the “Second Coming,” the Resurrection, and the Judgement to come—not a word, it will be observed, about the Atonement or Justification! Even so late in his career as the Second Missionary journey, Paul was not by his own confession preaching what has been commonly called Paulinism. The author of the Acts is right, then, in his suggestion that there was a general scheme of missionary propaganda which Peter and Paul both followed; the latter only developed the doctrines we associate with his name in consequence of difficulties in the Galatian Churches. We ought perhaps to emphasise the word “you” in 1 Cor. ii. 2: “I did not think it right to recognise among you anything except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” Possibly his change of strategy was due to the comparative failure at Athens of the message which hitherto had formed the staple of his missionary preaching.

There is nothing here incompatible with the Lucan authorship of Acts; indeed, the picture the book gives us is confirmed by a true understanding of the methods and materials of Paul's early preaching. It may also be remarked that there is no particular reason why Luke, or any other of Paul's friends, should have read his epistles. Unless one of them was charged with its delivery, they might not even know that he had written them. We should get rid of the notion that Paul attached as much importance to his letters as we do; he was not writing for posterity. They were

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meant simply for the Churches to which they were addressed, and like other busy people, he only wrote when he was obliged to do so. Even his doctrines were thought out when the questions with which they dealt were to be faced. Perhaps the Epistle to the Romans was a more formal and considered statement, and he was able to write or dictate more at leisure when he was in prison. Normally, however, he did not think of himself as a theologian; he was a busy missionary, travelling and organising in desperate haste, forced to become the supremely great thinker he was by circumstances.

So far as the character of Paul is concerned, there is no great discrepancy between the Acts and his epistles. The only difference is that which is natural between the portrait of a great man seen from the outside, and the picture a man gives unconsciously of himself. In the Acts and the Epistles alike, we have delineated for us a passionate, highly-strung, and exceedingly sensitive man, always heroic and at last achieving serenity, not so much by temperamental development, as by a great love and a uniquely adventurous experience. It is true that the Paul of the Acts is a more accommodating person than the Paul of the Epistles. The difficulty about the food-law and its place in the resolutions of the Council of Jerusalem has been considered already (§ 7), and perhaps need not be discussed again; it may be mentioned here, however, that the fact that, when the question of dietary regulations comes up at Corinth and elsewhere (1 Cor. viii.; Rom. xiv.), Paul makes no reference whatever to the "decree," almost forces us to accept the view

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taken above that the decree could not have contained any prohibition on the subject.

In Gal. i. Paul certainly gives us the impression that no human being had any part in his conversion, whereas in Acts (xxii. 14) Ananias of Damascus is represented as having had a great deal to do with it. There is no absolute contradiction here, but there does seem to be a difference in point of view. If Paul was not fighting for his life in the Epistle to the Galatians, we should have been compelled to admit that it was rather ungracious of him to ignore the part played by Ananias in Damascus and Barnabas in Jerusalem. But the fact that in Acts itself there are two accounts of the conversion and the events which followed it, in one of which Ananias plays a much more important role than he does in the other, while in a third account (Acts xxvi. 16 ff.) he is ignored altogether, should make us ask the question "Can we explain the stress laid upon the help given by Ananias in two of the accounts of Paul's conversion and the silence about him in the other two (Acts xxvi.; Gal. i.), without suspecting either the author of Acts of obtrusively putting him in or Paul of ungraciously leaving him out?"

It will help us in the discussion of this question, as well as with other difficulties which fall to be considered in the sequel, if we take into account the habits of many ancient historians. The modern historian quotes his authorities to reinforce his narrative, generally giving chapter and verse in a footnote; but he works his quotations into his own composition. The ancient historian, on the other hand, often, though not always, copied his sources, giving his

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readers first a piece of one source, then of another, his chief care being rather to do justice to them all than to adhere to a strict chronology. So in the early part of the Old Testament the same incident is told from two different points of view—the story of the Creation, for instance, or that of the foundation of the monarchy in Israel. The modern historian selects from his sources what he thinks the most reliable account of the incidents he is to relate, and sticks to it; the ancient historian is more respectful to ancient documents, and gives his readers selections from them all. The author of Acts is exceedingly clever at making what the critics call “joins,” but I have no doubt that he does tell the same story twice over or even oftener from different points of view. In Acts ix. he tells the story of Paul’s conversion from the point of view of the Church at Antioch, in Acts xxii. he reports Paul as giving the story in a way that would specially appeal to the Church at Jerusalem, in Acts xxvi. he makes Paul tell the same story from his own point of view. Naturally, if the report of Paul’s speech in chap. xxii. came from a Jerusalem source, the Jewish Christians who provided the author with his material here would be inclined to make the most of, and perhaps even to exaggerate, the part played by the Jewish Christian Ananias, just as the Church at Antioch would emphasise the part played by Barnabas in the history of Saul of Tarsus. More serious discrepancies between Acts and Galatians will be considered later on (§ 11); there I shall seek to shew that they can be settled by the suggestions as to our author’s methods advanced here.

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There are certain passages in the Acts in which the natural "they" of the narrative (generally Paul and Silas) suddenly and without warning becomes "we," the "we" giving place to "they" again later on. Two explanations of this fact are possible; either the author himself joined the party at this stage, or he is quoting a diary written by someone who did so. These sections are to be found in xvi. 10-18; xx. 5; end of xxi. 17; xxvii. 28. If the "Western" text¹ is to be accepted, there is another short "we-passage" in xi. 27. In view of what has been said in the last paragraph, there is nothing incredible in the second of these alternatives (that the author is quoting a diary kept by a companion of Paul, not himself), that he is, so to say, setting us listening in from another station, when he substitutes "we" for "they."

On the whole, however, the first and simpler alternative seems likely. Dr Harnack long ago analysed very carefully the style and diction of the "we-passages," and shewed that they correspond closely to the rest of the Acts and the Third Gospel; if the author of these passages was not also the author of all the rest, he has assimilated them very skilfully. This is, of course, true of his treatment of all his sources, and might not be convincing, if the "we-passages" were not the most vivid parts of the whole narrative; indeed it is difficult to believe that they have been edited at all. It should be said that our author habitually writes in one way when he is translating, as he is in the greater part of the Gospel and in much of Acts i.-xv. (from Aramaic into Greek) and in

¹ See below, § 12.

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another when he is composing freely, as in the narrative parts of Acts xvi.—xxviii., and in Luke i. 1–4. His diction is the same all through, but his style takes the colour of his source. The strange thing is that in spite of this variety, we can recognise the same hand everywhere. We infer that much the likeliest explanation of all the facts is that Luke, who, we know from Paul's Epistles, was a companion of Paul, was himself the author of the whole of both books. Sometimes, as in the Gospel, so in the Acts, he relies on oral or written sources, sometimes he is drawing on his own vivid memories; always the historian who puts the material that is given us is the same, and that historian is Luke the physician. The motives ascribed to the author in § 2 clearly fit the Gentile Luke.

We infer then that Luke joined Paul at Troas on the Second Missionary journey, travelled with the party to Philippi, was left there and picked up on the return journey through Macedonia, and that he afterwards went to Jerusalem with Paul. While Paul was in prison at Cæsarea he was free to prepare materials for his books. Two years later he set sail in Paul's company for Italy, was shipwrecked and marooned in Malta on the way, and finally arrived in Rome, where, if Plooi and Still¹ are right, he handed the materials he had collected to "Theophilus." Somewhere in his travels in Paul's company he met John Mark, and incorporated a good deal of Marcan material both in the Gospel and in the Acts.

¹ See above, § 2.

What do we know of Luke?

§ 10. *What do we know of Luke?*

Whether Luke was a native of Philippi may be doubted. Sir William Ramsay thinks that he was "the man from Macedonia" whom Paul saw in his sleep at Troas. It is quite possible that he had come from Macedonia on that occasion, and had the evening before been urging Paul to cross the water into Europe. If this was the case, we can well imagine Paul dreaming of him at night. But in xvi. 15 we read that "Lydia constrained *us*" (Paul and Luke) to stay at her house; it seems unlikely that Luke would have stayed anywhere but at home, if he had been a permanent resident at Philippi. There is, moreover, a very ancient tradition connecting him closely with Antioch in Syria. This is borne out by the "Muratorian Canon," the oldest extant list of New Testament books. In referring to Luke's Gospel, it makes the fantastic statement that "Luke before the ascension ('ante ascensum') wrote his gospel"; this has been cleverly emended by Dr Rendel Harris to "Antiochensis" ("Luke of Antioch"). Yet again, in the "Western" text of Acts xi. 27 we have at the end of the verse "and there was great rejoicing; and, when *we* were assembled." This definitely locates Luke at Antioch. In Acts xiii. 1 a "Lucius of Cyrene" appears as a member of the elders' meeting in the Church where believers in Jesus were first called "Christians," and world-wide Christianity was born. He comes next after "Simeon Niger" who, Dr Deissmann thinks, may be identified with Simon of Cyrene. It is tempting to think that Luke is here

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disguising himself under his Roman name, but we cannot be sure of this, because New Testament writers did not mention themselves by name in their books. At any rate, Luke shews great interest in the Church at Antioch, and one of his sources comes from that city. Turning back to Acts xi. 20, we find that "men of Cyprus and Cyrene . . . had come to Antioch, and preached the word to Greeks." Barnabas came from Cyprus, Lucius and possibly Simeon Niger from Cyrene, and so we have the leaders mentioned in Acts xiii. 1 again! It is often forgotten that Paul was not the first missionary to Gentiles.

Luke was perhaps, then, already a leader in the Church at Antioch when Saul was introduced to it by Barnabas; afterwards he went to Macedonia, and, during his stay there, heard that Paul had arrived at the coast of Asia; he went over, and entreated his old friend to come over to Europe, and, after the Church at Philippi had been founded, was left by Paul in charge of it till Paul returned. The fact that Titus is not mentioned in Acts has led to the belief that he was Luke's brother, and that Luke himself was "the brother"—we should probably translate "his" (*i.e.* "Titus") "brother"—who was sent with Titus and another friend of Paul connected with the Church in Macedonia to make the collection for the saints in Jerusalem at Corinth (2 Cor. viii. 18). This is speculative, but not unlikely.

Luke's Sources in the Acts

§ II. *Luke's Sources in the Acts*

Here I can only give conclusions, in coming to which I am greatly indebted to Harnack and the great work on the Acts entitled *The Beginnings of Christianity*, edited by Drs Lake and Foakes-Jackson. Luke's first source came from the Church at Jerusalem, and may be associated with such names as John the son of Zebedee and John Mark. Chaps. i., iii., iv., v. 1-11, xii. 1-23, xv. 1-35 come from that source; Peter and John are prominent, and the story of the Council of Jerusalem is told from the point of view of the authorities at Jerusalem, who are given the last word on the question of intercourse between Jews and Gentiles in the Church.

It is odd that James in xxi. 25—a *we*-passage—refers to the decree of the Council, as though Paul had never heard about it!

The second source I should, with Harnack and others, associate with Philip and the seven, and the Church at Cæsarea. At Cæsarea Paul and Luke stayed at the house of Philip, one of the seven, who had "four unmarried daughters who were all prophetesses." Luke quaintly adds: "We stayed there more days" (? "than we should otherwise have done"). This second source is more radical in tone than the first, and emphasises the initiative taken by Stephen and Philip. From it come chap. ii. (the story of Pentecost); v. 17-42; vi.; vii.; viii.; ix. 31-xi. 18. Thus we have *two* accounts of the way in which the revival began, and we need not add the 5000 converts of chap. iii. to the 3000 of chap. ii. (the two

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figures counted together would make an immense Church at Jerusalem), *two* accounts of their voluntary communism and of an imprisonment of apostles. The tone of the first source is on the whole more conservative and sober, that of the second tends to lay greater stress on the miraculous. From it we get our narrative of Pentecost, of the Spirit's carrying Philip in a trance to Azotus after his encounter with the eunuch, as well as the story about people being healed by Peter's shadow. My only doubt about this division is as to whether ix. 31-43 ought not to be put down to the Marcan-Jerusalem source; the story told there is extraordinarily similar to that of Mark v. 38 ff.—indeed the name of the person raised from the dead appears to have been the same, for Talitha and Tabitha are probably interchangeable. Peter, we remember, was present in Jairus' house, and would seem to have imitated his Master closely, except that he did not venture to raise the patient by the hand. I should like to associate Mark with both stories, but, in that case, chaps. x. and xi. should go into the Jerusalem-source too.

The third source comes from Antioch, and begins in chap. ix. 1-30; it is taken up again in xi. 19-30, and then xii. 24-xiv. 28; xv. 26-xvi. 9. This is important, because it brings us up against a serious difficulty. In Gal. ii. Paul is asserting that his apostolic commission has come direct to him from the Lord, and in the course of his argument he mentions that, before the time when he wrote the epistle, he had visited Jerusalem *twice*; he is careful to tell us what happened on each occasion, and it is impossible to

Luke's Sources in the Acts

imagine that he ignored completely a third visit. It is easy to see what capital his critics might have made of the knowledge that he had actually been there *three* times; they would certainly have been aware of the fact, if it were true. If, on the other hand, we count up the number of visits paid before the beginning of the Second Missionary journey in *Acts*, we have *three* visits (ix. 26 ff.; xi. 27 ff. (cf. xii. 25); xv. 1 ff.). It would seem either that Luke is inaccurate, or Paul somewhat disingenuous. On the South Galatian theory—the theory, that is, that the Galatian Churches were those of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe evangelised on the First Missionary journey—it is *barely* possible to escape our dilemma, by the suggestion that Paul wrote Galatians *before the Council of Jerusalem*, between the First and Second Missionary journeys; then he would only have visited Jerusalem twice up to date. But this is unlikely on chronological grounds; moreover, it would make Galatians the earliest of Paul's epistles, and upset all our ideas of the development of Paul's thought. That might not be a great calamity—for they are somewhat artificial anyhow—but, when all is said and done, it is difficult to believe that the Thessalonian epistles were written after Galatians. In any case, chronological difficulties seem insuperable, and we must fall back upon another explanation. If our suggestion about Antioch and Jerusalem sources is correct, we have solved the problem at a stroke. Luke tells the story of Paul's second visit *first* from the point of view of the Church at Antioch—emphasising the collection made by one Church for the benefit of another—*then* from that

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of the Church in Jerusalem; we have the same phenomenon as in the early chapters, *a duplicate account of the same incidents*. There are minor discrepancies, of course; Paul says that "he was unknown by face to the Christian Churches in Judæa" (Gal. i. 22) on his first visit, Luke that "he preached boldly in the name of the Lord" in Jerusalem; Luke evidently did not think it necessary to check his sources on points of detail, any more than he took the trouble to make his three accounts of Paul's conversion in Acts agree in every respect (Acts ix. 7 says that his companions "heard a voice, but saw no one," Acts xxii. 9 that "they saw the light, but did *not* hear the voice of Him who spoke to me").¹ We shall be landed in a morass of small difficulties unless we realise that faithfulness to sources was more important to an ancient historian than absolute consistency.

We do not need to look for sources in the rest of the book. Information about the Second Missionary journey, even when Luke was not himself with Paul, could easily be obtained from Paul himself; and for the rest Luke had his own diary.

It is significant that most of the obscurities in Acts occur in the speeches, not in the narrative; we have, for instance, an almost untranslatable sentence in the original of Acts x. 36 ff. and again in xiii. 27. It is sometimes suggested that Luke, like Thucydides, made up speeches and put them on the lips of his heroes at appropriate points in the narrative; surely if he had done so, they would not have been so rough and difficult; he is struggling with the obscurities of

¹ See also what has been said about Ananias, § 9.

Were there Two Editions of Luke-Acts?

an original, and this is reassuring as to the authentic character of the speeches of Peter, Stephen, and Paul.

§ 12. *Were there Two Editions of Luke-Acts?*

The most interesting problem offered us by the text of Acts is that of the so-called "Western" text. Of this Codex Bezae, a sixth-century bilingual MS. at present in the University Library at Cambridge, is the leading, but by no means the only, representative. Indeed, Canon Streeter thinks that it contains the Gospels and Acts as read in the second century by the Churches of Italy and Gaul. In the Acts this text gives us a considerably longer book; Codex Bezae itself, it should be said, does not give us the full "Western" text, but it can be reconstructed by the help of very numerous MSS. and versions in both east and west. Some years ago in view of the fact that the "Western" text gives us a shorter text of Luke, and a longer text of Acts than appears in our versions, the late Professor Blass suggested that Luke prepared two editions of both books; the text of our English versions represent the first edition of the Gospel and the second of the Acts, while the "Western" text gives us the second of the Gospel and the first of the Acts. My own judgement is that this would be very difficult to prove for the Gospel, but is much more feasible for the Acts. I do not think Blass has been fairly treated by most modern critics.

Dr A. C. Clarke has lately made a strong defence

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of the "Western" text as original; he regards the text of the English versions as a somewhat confused abbreviation. On the other hand, the late Dr J. H. Ropes in the volume of the *Beginnings of Christianity* devoted to the subject came to the conclusion that the text is a paraphrase. Important readings will be mentioned in the Commentary as they occur, and it will be seen that, in passage after passage, they clear up some ambiguity or solve some difficulty. If it is, as Dr Ropes thought, nothing more than a paraphrase, it is certainly a very knowledgeable one, and, on the whole, makes the Acts a more readable and lively book; I strongly suspect it is Luke's composition.

§ 13. *The Date of Acts*

If the suggestions made above about Luke's motive in writing are accepted, we shall find it necessary to distinguish between the time when the book, in whole or in part, was written, and the time when it was issued to the public. There is no reason to believe that Luke intended to write another book describing Paul's trial and its result—and it is difficult to imagine that he would have finished the Acts so inconclusively, if it had not been written before the trial had taken place. The undeveloped doctrine of the person of Christ revealed in the speeches throughout the book, the absence of any reference to Paul's epistles or his martyrdom, the silence about the terrible persecution of the Church by Nero, all point to an early date—before A.D. 64 at least—for its writing. On the other

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hand, it is never quoted by any Christian writer before Polycarp (first half of the second century); perhaps it remained in private possession until after Luke's death, and then was published, probably by the Roman Church.

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§ 14. *Chronological Table of the Chief Events narrated in the Acts*

Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus, and the Founding of the Church at Jerusalem	A.D. 29
Conversion of Saul of Tarsus	A.D. 35-36
Paul's First Visit to Jerusalem	A.D. 38
Paul at Tarsus	A.D. 38-48 (?)
Martyrdom of James the Son of Zebedee, Imprisonment of Peter, and Death of Herod Agrippa I.	A.D. 44
Church at Syrian Antioch founded	A.D. 45-47 (?)
Claudius expels Jews and Christians from Rome	A.D. 49
Prophecy of Agabus, Collection at Antioch, and Paul's Second Visit to Jerusalem	A.D. 48-49
Council of Jerusalem	A.D. 49
Paul's Second Missionary Journey begins	A.D. 49
Paul arrives in Corinth	A.D. 50
Paul's Third Missionary Journey	A.D. 52
Three Years at Ephesus	A.D. 52-55
Third Visit to Jerusalem, and Arrest	A.D. 56
Shipwreck and Arrival in Rome	A.D. 58-59
End of Acts	A.D. 61
Martyrdom of Peter and Paul	A.D. 64-65 (?)
Martyrdom of James the Lord's Brother at Jerusalem	A.D. 62

N.B.—*Nearly all these dates are open to dispute,
and this table must be regarded as tentative.*

PART II

THE COMMENTARY

§ I. *The Ascension and what followed* (Chap. I)

1 THE ¹ former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning
2 all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the
day in which he was received up, after that he had given
commandment through the ² Holy Ghost unto the apostles
3 whom he had chosen: to whom he also ³ shewed himself
alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto
them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things
4 concerning the kingdom of God: and, ⁴ being assembled
together with them, he charged them not to depart from
Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father,
5 which, *said he*, ye heard from me: for John indeed
baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized ⁵ with the
Holy Ghost not many days hence.

6 They therefore, when they were come together, asked
him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom
7 to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know
times or seasons, which the Father hath ⁶ set within his own
8 authority. But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost
is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in
Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the utter-
9 most part of the earth. And when he had said these things,
as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received
10 him out of their sight. And while they were looking sted-
fastly into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by

¹ Gr. *first*.

³ Gr. *presented*.

⁵ Or, *in*.

² Or, *Holy Spirit*: and so throughout this book.

⁴ Or, *eating with them*.

⁶ Or, *appointed by*.

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- 11 them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, which was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven.
- 12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is nigh unto Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey off. And when they were come in, they went up into the upper chamber, where they were abiding; both Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James *the son* of Alphæus, and
- 14 Simon the Zealot, and Judas *the* ¹ son of James. These all with one accord continued stedfastly in prayer, ² with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.
- 15 And in these days Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren, and said (and there was a multitude of ³ persons
- 16 *gathered* together, about a hundred and twenty), Brethren, it was needful that the scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost spake before by the mouth of David concerning
- 17 Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered among us, and received his ⁴ portion in this
- 18 ministry. (Now this man obtained a field with the reward of his iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in
- 19 the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it became known to all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch that in their language that field was called Akeldama, that is,
- 20 The field of blood.) For it is written in the book of Psalms,
Let his habitation be made desolate,
And let no man dwell therein:
and,
His ⁵ office let another take.
- 21 Of the men therefore which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out ⁶ among
- 22 us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that he was received up from us, of these must one become a
- 23 witness with us of his resurrection. And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus,

¹ Or, brother. See Jude i.

³ Gr. *names*.

⁴ Or, *lot*.

² Or, *with certain women*.

⁵ Gr. *overseership*.

⁶ Or, *over*.

Acts i. 1-26

24 and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew of these two the
25 one whom thou hast chosen, to take the place in this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas fell away, that he might
26 go to his own place. And they gave lots¹ for them; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

The title "Acts of the Apostles" was probably not given to the book by Luke; as part of a work in two parts, perhaps it had no independent name at all. Streeter thinks "Theophilus" was the secret name of a Roman Christian of rank, suggesting Flavius Clemens. The "Western" text—see Introduction—almost certainly read in its original form—instead of "until the day on which having given command to the apostles whom He had chosen, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, He was taken up"—"On the day on which He gave command to the apostles whom He had chosen through the Holy Spirit, and bade them preach the Gospel." This does away with the difficulty that the Ascension ought not to come until ver. 10. If the ordinary text is retained, we have it twice over. It should be noticed that, in accordance with this the "Western" text also omits "and was taken up into Heaven" from Luke xxiv. 51. It is not generally realised that our versions make Jesus ascend *twice over*, once in Luke xxiv. 51 and again in Acts i. 9, 10, the first time apparently on the evening of Easter Sunday.

The disciples are still harping upon their nationalist

¹ Or, *unto*.

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hopes (ver. 7; cf. Luke xxiv. 21); they disappeared after Pentecost. In ver. 8 we have what has often been called an outline of the book—in Jerusalem (chaps. i.–viii. 3), Judæa and Samaria (chaps. viii. 4–40; ix. 32–xi. 18), and “to the end of the earth” (*i.e.* Rome)—the rest of the book.

Our Lord’s intermittent appearances during the forty days can perhaps best be understood as a series of suggestions that the seen and the unseen—this world and that other—have now become one. Jesus is going from the here into the everywhere, but before He leaves them to be with them for ever, not nearer to one than the other, and not in one place more than another, He will fill their corporate life with suggestions of His nearness. We need not think of a literal elevation of His body; “a cloud received Him out of their sight” simply means “He disappeared.”

The names of the eleven are the same as in Luke vi. 14 ff., but the mother and brothers of Jesus have now joined the inner circle; we are not told where they met in Jerusalem, but we gather that the Mount of Olives had become their rendezvous.

There is a serious discrepancy between the account of the way in which Judas Iscariot met his end given by Peter here and that found in Matt. xxvii. 2 ff. According to the First Gospel, it was not Judas who bought the “field of blood,” but the chief-priests, who made a foreign cemetery of it; moreover, Judas hanged himself in desperate remorse, after returning the blood-money to the Temple. According to Peter in this passage Judas used the money to buy the land, and “swelled up”—this is almost certainly the

correct translation of ver. 18—"and burst in the middle." We may suppose that Peter is reporting what he had heard in the streets. It was a generally accepted idea that traitors swelled up and burst; this idea is found in the "story of Ahikar"—an Eastern tale well known to Jesus and His disciples—for there are references to it in the teaching of Jesus (Matt. xxiv. 50, 51; Luke xii. 46) and elsewhere in the New Testament (*e.g.* 2 Pet. ii. 22)—in which Nadab, who betrayed his kind uncle Ahikar, suffered this melancholy fate. Peter would not have had the time to discover the real facts, and is quoting—in the Acts—the gossip of the streets. Probably the true and much more creditable facts reported in Matt. xxvii. 2 ff. only came out later.

The "Western" text makes *Barnabas* one of the two candidates for apostleship. Barsabbas ("Son of the Sabbath") is said to have drunk poison without suffering any harm (this "miracle" is referred to in the unauthentic "appendix" to Mark's Gospel (Mark xvi. 18). The "Judas Barsabbas" of Acts xv. 22 is, of course, a different person. Matthias is a shortened form of Mattathias. Clement of Alexandria identifies him with Zaccheus, but this is just a guess. The Syriac text has "Tholmai" for Matthias.

Peter has been blamed for suggesting the casting of lots to decide between his (or the Church's—the Western text makes Peter nominate, the Received text the Church) two nominees. But the casting of lots was a universal custom in any case of doubt. It was not gambling, but the recognised way of discovering the will of God.

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The conditions required for appointment are interesting; the nominee must be a "witness of the Resurrection," and have also been a disciple of Jesus from John's Baptism to the Ascension (ver. 22). This definition exactly corresponds to the scope of the "Gospel according to Mark," for, if the original ending of that Gospel had not been lost, it would probably have included the Ascension. The first business of an apostle, then, is to be a witness of the Resurrection; that is probably why Paul enumerates the appearances of the Risen Lord to individual men, and ignores those to women. He himself claims to be a witness "born out of due time," and *therefore* an apostle (1 Cor. xv. 8; cf. ix. 1).

§ 2. *Pentecost, the Birthday of the Church* (Chap. 2)

- 1 AND when the day of Pentecost¹ was now come, they were
2 all together in one place. And suddenly there came from
heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it
3 filled all the house where they were sitting. And there
appeared unto them tongues² parting asunder, like as of
4 fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all
filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other
tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.
5 Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men,
6 from every nation under heaven. And when this sound was
heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded,
because that every man heard them speaking in his own
7 language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying,
8 Behold, are not all these which speak Galilæans? And how
hear we, every man in our own language, wherein we

¹ Gr. *was being fulfilled*.

² Or, *parting among them*. Or, *distributing themselves*.

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- 9 were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the
10 dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judæa and Cappadocia, in
Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and
the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from
11 Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we
do hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works
12 of God. And they were all amazed, and were perplexed,
13 saying one to another, What meaneth this? But others
mocking said, They are filled with new wine.
- 14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice,
and spake forth unto them, *saying*, Ye men of Judæa, and all
ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and
15 give ear unto my words. For these are not drunken, as ye
16 suppose; seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day; but this
is that which hath been spoken ¹ by the prophet Joel:
- 17 And it shall be in the last days, saith God,
I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh:
And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
And your young men shall see visions,
And your old men shall dream dreams:
- 18 Yea and on my ² servants and on my ³ handmaidens in
those days
Will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.
- 19 And I will shew wonders in the heaven above,
And signs on the earth beneath;
Blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:
- 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness,
And the moon into blood,
Before the day of the Lord come,
That great and notable *day*:
- 21 And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of
the Lord shall be saved.
- 22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a
man approved of God unto you by ⁴ mighty works and
wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of
23 you, even as ye yourselves know; him, being delivered

¹ Or, *through*.

³ Gr. *bondmaidens*.

² Gr. *bondmen*.

⁴ Gr. *powers*.

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up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,
24 ye by the hand of ¹ lawless men did crucify and slay: whom
God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because
25 it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David
saith concerning him,

I beheld the Lord always before my face;
For he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:
26 Therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
Moreover my flesh also shall ² dwell in hope:
27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades,
Neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption.
28 Thou madest known unto me the ways of life;
Thou shalt make me full of gladness ³ with thy countenance.

29 Brethren, I may say unto you freely of the patriarch David,
that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us
30 unto this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing
that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit
31 of his loins ⁴ he would set *one* upon his throne; he fore-
seeing *this* spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that
neither was he left in Hades, nor did his flesh see cor-
32 ruption. This Jesus did God raise up, ⁵ whereof we all
33 are witnesses. Being therefore ⁶ by the right hand of God
exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of
the Holy Ghost, he hath poured forth this, which ye see
34 and hear. For David ascended not into the heavens: but
he saith himself,

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,
35 Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.
36 Let ⁷ all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that
God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom
ye crucified.

37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their
heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles,
38 Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter *said* unto them,

¹ Or, *men without the law.*

³ Or, *in thy presence.*

⁵ Or, *of whom.*

² Or, *tabernacle.*

⁴ Or, *one should sit.*

⁶ Or, *at.*

⁷ Or, *every house.*

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Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall
 39 receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off,
 40 *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him. And with many other words he testified, and exhorted them,
 41 saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation. They then ¹ that received his word were baptized: and there were
 42 added *unto them* in that day about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and
² fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.
 43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and
 44 signs were done ³ by the apostles.⁴ And all that believed
 45 were together, and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according
 46 as any man had need. And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they did take their food with gladness and singleness
 47 of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added ⁵ to them day by day those that were being saved.

Instead of "When the day of Pentecost was fully come" the Western text reads "It came to pass in those days when the day of Pentecost was coming on," suggesting that the disciples were meeting together several days before Pentecost. The institution of the "Feast of Weeks" (*i.e.* Pentecost) is described in Lev. xxiii. 19 ff. There is nothing to indicate whether the "house" was a private house or part of the Temple. Probably the best translation of ver. 3 is that suggested in the Lake-Cadbury

¹ Or, *having received*.

² Or, *in fellowship*.

³ Or, *through*.

⁴ Many ancient authorities add *in Jerusalem; and great fear was upon all*.

⁵ Gr. *together*.

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commentary: "tongues, distributed among them, as if of fire." What the exact relation of this gift of tongues is to the "tongues" mentioned by Paul in 1 Cor. xii. 27 ff., xiii. 1, xiv. 2 ff. it is not easy to say. Paul speaks of "different kinds of tongues," and we may infer from 1 Cor. xiii. 1 that the distinction was between intelligible and unintelligible utterances; there is no suggestion of the power to speak foreign languages. Obviously, the Pentecostal gift was not identical with the gift so common at Corinth. It was the Rabbinical belief that the law was given to *all* the nations, that is, in 70 or 72 different languages. Luke may have been influenced by this idea, and certainly believed that the apostles spoke all the native languages of the countries from which their hearers came. This was not necessary, for everybody in the audience would understand reasonably well-pronounced Hellenistic Greek. Probably Peter and the others were miraculously freed from dialectical peculiarities—normally Peter would be able to speak a kind of pidgin-Greek—and were able easily to make themselves understood. This would be like one of the Pauline kinds of tongues—the intelligible sort. The present writer has heard a Durham miner who in ordinary conversation could not put together a sentence that he could understand until he was familiar with his dialect, pour forth in a prayer-meeting a flood of beautiful English, completely free from obscurities of pronunciation or faults of grammar, nor was he quoting either Bible or hymn-book during the greater part of his prayer. He was and is quite sure that this was the result of real inspiration, and

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is a modern parallel to the "miracle" at Pentecost. In ver. 9 "Judæa" must surely be wrong; it is altogether out of place between Mesopotamia and Cappadocia. There have been many attempts to emend, all of them more or less good guesses; Tertullian suggested Armenia, Bentley India, Burkitt Gordæa (Kurdistan); Augustine emended to "Jews," and took it with "dwellers in Mesopotamia." "New wine" means "wine still fermenting."

Peter's Speech.

The most remarkable feature of Peter's speech is the fact that he has nothing to say about his own life with Jesus, that almost everything that happened before the Cross would seem to have been blotted out by the amazing events that had happened since—ver. 22 is quite general. Jesus is "a Man appointed by God" (cf. Acts xvii. 31). This expression and the words "nailed up by the hand of lawless men"—*i.e.* "Gentiles"—point to a very early origin for this speech, and reassure us as to its authentic character; after the Pauline emphasis on "the Cross" had exercised its influence, the word "crucified" would surely have been used. For "pangs of death" we should read "snares set by death." There are two parts in the speech, the first concerned with the miracle of Pentecost, the second with the Death and Resurrection of Jesus. The quotation from Joel ii. 28 ff. is chosen, not because it was being literally fulfilled—for we read nothing about the sun being actually turned into darkness and the moon into

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blood at Pentecost—but because it described an outpouring of God's Spirit which overrode class and sex differences, and it provided Peter with a text for his appeal for instant decision. The argument of the second part is on the same lines as Paul's at Pisidian Antioch (cf. xiii. 33 ff.). Ps. xvi. cannot apply to David himself, though it was written by David, for the psalm expresses the belief that he, the anointed king, would not die like other men. But he did die, and therefore must be speaking of God's anointed still to come. Ps. cx., which describes the elevation of God's anointed to Jehovah's right hand, also cannot refer to David, for David did not ascend to Heaven. Jesus, and Jesus only, fulfils both psalms.

Whatever we may think of the convincingness of this line of argument, it is clear that there was no opposition at Pentecost. Only a few weeks after the event, in Jerusalem itself, to the very people who had seen Jesus die in agony and apparent despair on Calvary, Peter is able to assert that He is risen from the dead, and no one ventures to deny it. That is the amazing thing, and the most sceptical among us will find it hard to explain it away. For, even though the numbers converted may possibly be exaggerated, it is after all a fact of history that the Church was started on its career that day, and if anybody in Jerusalem could have challenged Peter's statements—it was to the interest of hundreds of powerful and clever people to do so—the whole thing would almost certainly have been nipped in the bud. So Peter became indeed the rock on which the Church was built.

Ver. 42 is one of the most often discussed verses in the New Testament. The original Greek may be taken in at least three ways: "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching, and the fellowship, which consisted of the breaking of the bread and of prayers" (*two* things), or "they continued . . . in the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, the breaking of the bread and prayers" (*four* things), or "they continued . . . in the apostles' teaching and the fellowship (that is the breaking of the bread) and the prayers" (*three* things). I take it that there were four different kinds of Christian meetings; one corresponded more or less to our preaching service ("the apostles' teaching"), a second to a modern Church meeting; here the rank and file took part, and matters such as the financial concerns of the group or the making of appointments could be dealt with; the third was the common meal at which there was a ceremonial breaking of the bread in memory of the Lord's death and anticipation of the time when He should come again and take His place at the table as of old; and, last, the hours of prayer in the Temple, where the group met during the day. The common meals would be taken morning and evening, before work and after it. Then there follows an enthusiastic account of the voluntary communism, which Luke evidently thinks was the chief glory of those golden days. It was only a continuation, in a much more widely extended company, of the life His twelve had been wont to live with Jesus in Galilee; when the "rich young ruler," as we call him, was bidden to "sell all that he had," he was invited to join the Lord's inner

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circle of good companions. It did not follow that all the friends of Jesus were called upon to do this—we think of Martha and Mary, who still lived on at Bethany—but those who went on their travels with Him did do so, women as well as men (cf. Luke viii. 3). In the generous excitement of the moment, a much larger group of people plunged into this new way of life; we may, if we like, say that such an experiment on so large a scale was certain to collapse; it still remains true that the fact that the experiment was made, and that such experiments go on being made, is evidence that the Spirit of Jesus was really, and is really, at work.

§ 3. *Church and State in Conflict* (Chaps. 3 and 4)

(For the location of “the Beautiful Gate,” see special note at end of Section.)

- 1 Now Peter and John were going up into the temple at the
- 2 hour of prayer, *being* the ninth *hour*. And a certain man that was lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the door of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;
- 3 who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple,
- 4 asked to receive an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes
- 5 upon him, with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them.
- 6 But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of
- 7 Nazareth, walk. And he took him by the right hand, and raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankle-
- 8 bones received strength. And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk; and he entered with them into the temple,
- 9 walking, and leaping, and praising God. And all the

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- 10 people saw him walking and praising God: and they took knowledge of him, that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.
- 11 And as he held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the ¹ porch that is called Solomon's, greatly
- 12 wondering. And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this ² man? or why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own
- 13 power or godliness we had made him to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his ³ Servant Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied before the face of Pilate, when he had
- 14 determined to release him. But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted
- 15 unto you, and killed the ⁴ Prince of life; whom God
- 16 raised from the dead; ⁵ whereof we are witnesses. And ⁶ by faith in his name hath his name made this man strong, whom ye behold and know: yea, the faith which is through him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence
- 17 of you all. And now, brethren, I wot that in ignorance ye
- 18 did it, as did also your rulers. But the things which God foreshewed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his
- 19 Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of
- 20 the Lord; and that he may send the Christ who hath been
- 21 appointed for you, *even* Jesus: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets which have
- 22 been since the world began. Moses indeed said, A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, ⁷ like unto me; to him shall ye hearken in all

¹ Or, *portico*.

² Or, *thing*.

³ Or, *Child*: and so in ver. 26; iv. 27, 30. See Matt. xii. 18; Isa. xlii. 1; lii. 13; liii. 11.

⁴ Or, *Author*.

⁵ Or, *of whom*.

⁶ Or, *on the ground of*.

⁷ Or, *as he raised up me*.

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23 things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. And it shall
be, that every soul, which shall not hearken to that prophet,
24 shall be utterly destroyed from among the people. Yea and
all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after,
25 as many as have spoken, they also told of these days. Ye
are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which
God ¹ made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham,
And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.
26 Unto you first God, having raised up his Servant, sent
him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from
your iniquities.

1 And as they spake unto the people, ² the priests and
the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon
2 them, being sore troubled because they taught the people,
3 and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And
they laid hands on them, and put them in ward unto the
4 morrow: for it was now eventide. But many of them
that heard the word believed; and the number of the men
came to be about five thousand.
5 And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers and
6 elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem; and
Annas the high priest *was there*, and Caiaphas, and John,
and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the
7 high priest. And when they had set them in the midst,
they inquired, By what power, or in what name, have ye
8 done this? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said
9 unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders, if we this
day are examined concerning a good deed done to an
impotent man, ³ by what means this man is ⁴ made whole;
10 be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel,
that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye
crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* in ⁵ him
11 doth this man stand here before you whole. He is the
stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which

¹ Gr. *covenanted*.

² Some ancient authorities read *the chief priests*.

³ Or, *in whom*.

⁴ Or, *saved*.

⁵ Or, *this name*.

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- 12 was made the head of the corner. And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.
- 13 Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, 14 that they had been with Jesus. And seeing the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing 15 against it. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, 16 saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable ¹ miracle hath been wrought through them, is manifest to all that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot 17 deny it. But that it spread no further among the people, let us threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man 18 in this name. And they called them, and charged them not 19 to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than 20 unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things 21 which we saw and heard. And they, when they had further threatened them, let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people; for all men 22 glorified God for that which was done. For the man was more than forty years old, on whom this ¹ miracle of healing was wrought.
- 23 And being let go, they came to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said 24 unto them. And they, when they heard it, lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, O ² Lord, ³ thou that didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea, and 25 all that in them is: ⁴ who by the Holy Ghost, *by* the mouth of our father David thy servant, didst say,
Why did the Gentiles rage,
And the peoples ⁵ imagine vain things?

¹ Gr., *Sign*.

² Or, *Master*.

³ Or, *thou art he that did make*.

⁴ The Greek text in this clause is somewhat uncertain.

⁵ Or, *meditate*.

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- 26 The kings of the earth set themselves in array,
And the rulers were gathered together,
Against the Lord, and against his ¹ Anointed:
- 27 for of a truth in this city against thy holy Servant Jesus,
whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate,
with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered
28 together, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel fore-
29 ordained to come to pass. And now, Lord, look upon
their threatenings: and grant unto thy ² servants to speak
30 thy word with all boldness, while thou stretchest forth thy
hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done
31 through the name of thy holy Servant Jesus. And when
they had prayed, the place was shaken wherein they were
gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy
Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.
- 32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one
heart and soul: and not one of *them* said that aught of the
things which he possessed was his own; but they had all
33 things common. And with great power gave the apostles
their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus ³ and
34 great grace was upon them all. For neither was there
among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors
of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the
35 things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet:
and distribution was made unto each, according as any one
had need.
- 36 And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas
(which is, being interpreted, Son of ⁴ exhortation), a
37 Levite, a man of Cyprus by race, having a field, sold it, and
brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

It should be noted that Peter and John come up to the Temple at the "hour of prayer" (3 p.m.). There were two hours of prayer, those of the morning and evening sacrifice; this was the time of the evening

¹ Gr., *Christ*.

³ Some ancient authorities add *Christ*.

² Gr., *bond-servants*.

⁴ Or, *consolation*.

sacrifice, as the "Western" text tells us. The story of the man who was cured "walking and leaping and praising God" is meant to suggest Isa. xxxv. 6 ("Then shall the lame man leap as an hart").

Peter's second speech is on different lines from his first—in Chapter 2. New points are the use of the title "servant" of Jesus and the reference to the coming "restoration of all things." The A.V. translation "child" for "servant" is quite misleading; the reference is obviously to the Servant-songs attached to the Book of Isaiah (Isa. liii., etc.); Jesus is the suffering servant of God. I think there can be little doubt that Jesus had applied the ideas underlying these chapters to Himself, but this is the first time we have met them outside the Gospels. Jesus is also called "the Holy and Righteous One" and "the Prince (or 'Originator') of life" (compare the phrase which in Aramaic would be the same—"the Prince of salvation" in Heb. ii. 10). As to the "restoration of all things," we must remember that it was believed that, at the end of every world-period of a thousand years, the stars returned to their original positions, and "the world's great age began anew." This period coincided with the resurrection from its ashes of the mythical bird, the phoenix, and the rejuvenation of the palm-tree (also called "phoenix" in Greek). Towards the close of the world-period three and a half years of cosmic trouble were to be expected; they are spoken of as "times and time and half a time" in the Book of Daniel and the Apocalypse, and 1260 days in Rev. xii. 6.

There are other obscurities in this speech; possibly

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ver. 16 is best punctuated, as by Prof. Burkitt: "of which we are witnesses and to the faith of His name. This man whom you see and know, His name has set on his feet." It should also be observed that Peter acquits both the people of Jerusalem and their rulers of deliberate wickedness in the judicial murder of Jesus. This is an amazingly charitable judgement, and to my mind can have no other basis than the saying of Jesus from the Cross (Luke xxiii. 34). Those who, for textual reasons, doubt whether "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" can be genuine, have not attached sufficient weight to the fact that Peter, also in a passage written by Luke, makes what amounts to the same surprising admission (cf. also 1 Tim. i. 13).

By "the captain of the Temple" is meant either (a) the "sagan," who was next to the high-priest in official rank, or (b) the official who was in command of the troops who guarded the outer court of the Temple, and prevented Gentiles from crossing the barrier. For this purpose a body of soldiers of Jewish birth was drafted into the Roman army, and was commanded by an official appointed probably by the Sanhedrin. Many scholars think that the crucifixion of Jesus was entrusted to this body of such troops (cf. John xix. 16, where Jesus is handed over to "them" [*i.e.* "the Jews"] "to be crucified"). The leading priests, who take action against the apostles as they had done against Jesus, all belonged to the Sadducean party; they were agnostics on the question of the resurrection, believing, like Job's comforters, that everyone in the

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long-run gets his deserts in this life—a very comfortable doctrine for men who are well off and highly placed. There seems to be something wrong with iv, 5 and 6. The grammar is very defective in the original; moreover, Annas was not high-priest at this time; Luke iii. 2 seems to make him share the high-priesthood with Caiaphas, who was actually high-priest throughout this period. Annas, the head of the clan, was really the leading spirit in the priestly caste; he had been deposed by the Romans, but succeeded in keeping the office in the family for a long time, Caiaphas being his son-in-law. For “John” the “Western” text reads “Jonathan”; we know of a Jonathan who was son of Annas, appointed high-priest in succession to Caiaphas in A.D. 36. Either this text is right, or the author of it knows the facts well. The “Western” text reads in vers. 10-12: “Let it be known to you . . . that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by this has this man been made whole before you, and by nothing else. For He is the stone . . . and it became the cornerstone, and there is no other name, etc.” Again an improvement. This quotation is used by Jesus in Mark xii. 10; Luke xx. 17; Matt. xxi. 42—it comes from Ps. cxviii. 22. Jesus also used it in controversy with the priests. “Unlearned” (ver. 13) means “unable to read or write Greek”; how did they know this? Perhaps they had to sign their names in court. This is an argument against “John” being meant for John Mark, as some have thought; we can scarcely bring ourselves to believe that the

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author of the Second Gospel could not write Greek at all. If it was John the son of Zebedee, as has been generally supposed, we must give up any idea that he was of superior social standing to Peter. Peter and John could speak and understand spoken Greek, but could not read or write it. "Ignorant" may mean either "uninstructed in Rabbinic lore"—like Jesus (John vii. 15), they had never been to college—or "not eloquent." It would appear that most of them had not seen Peter and John before; the "Western" text tells us that "*some* of them recognised them after a time as having been seen in the company of Jesus." The Received text may mean either that they concluded from their courage that they had been with Jesus, or that they were puzzled at first, and, looking closer, or after further inquiry, discovered the reason—they had been with Jesus. In any case, there is a dramatic contrast with Mark xiv. 67; a servant-maid of Caiaphas recognises Peter has been with Jesus because of his overwrought condition, her master comes to the same conclusion for a precisely opposite reason. This will bear thinking about. In ver. 19 "to hear you rather than God" reminds one of Plato's Apology, where Socrates on trial for his life says almost exactly the same thing. In ver. 25 as it stands in the Greek text we have what Torrey rightly calls "an incoherent jumble of words"; he makes a good case for mistranslation from an Aramaic original; this is supported by the fact that a word ("Master") is used of God which is only found elsewhere in Luke's writings in Luke ii. 29, where there is obviously an Aramaic background. There

Acts iii. 1-26; iv. 1-37

follows a second even more enthusiastic description of the voluntary communism of the Church at Jerusalem, with special reference to Joseph Barnabas, a Levite from Cyprus. His name does not mean "son of consolation," but "son of Nebo" (or "the prophet"). "Son of exhortation" is, however, a possible translation of the name of Manaen, who appears—along with Barnabas—as a leader of the Church at Syrian Antioch in Acts xiii. 1.

WHERE WAS THE "BEAUTIFUL GATE" ?

This has usually been identified with the "Shushan" gate (the external door on the east side of the Temple area) or with the "Nicanor" gate, on the east side of the Temple proper. (We must, of course, distinguish between the whole Temple precincts (including the Court of the Gentiles) and the Temple itself (within the "wall of partition," which separated the outer courts from the inner sanctuary).) But neither identification has any very substantial basis. According to the A.V. and R.V. Peter and John came to the "beautiful gate," and there healed the lame man, afterwards going into the Temple itself. It would seem to follow that in this case, the "Shushan" gate might be the "beautiful gate." Afterwards they gathered around them a crowd in Solomon's porch, which must have been inside the Temple. According to the "Western" text, the lame man entered the Temple with Peter and John, and "all the people saw him . . . and when Peter and John came out he went with them, holding on to them, and the people stood in amazement in the porch which was called Solomon's." The Temple here means not the whole Temple area, but the Temple proper, and the "beautiful gate" must have been further in than Solomon's porch. The ordinary text would fit the "Shushan" gate, the "Western" text the gate of "Nicanor." If the apostles were living in the city, entrance by the "Shushan" gate involves going outside by one gate to enter in by another ! Of course, it is barely possible, as the "Lake-Cadbury" commentary suggests,¹ that they were still spending the night at Bethany. Solomon's porch would certainly seem to have been on the eastern side of the Temple ; "when King Solomon," says Josephus, ". . . walled in the shrine on the eastern side, there was added one cloister founded on the mound." It is likely that, in Herod's Temple, the name "Solomon's porch" was still attached to this eastern colonnade. The eastern side of the Temple, the same authority tells us, was much the most gorgeous. The "Western" text, and the identification with "Nicanor's" gate, seems on the whole most likely to be correct.

¹ See *The Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. 5, pp. 482 ff.

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§ 4. *Some Troubles and More Successes* (Chap. 5)

- 1 BUT a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife,
2 sold a possession, and kept back *part* of the price, his wife
also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid
3 it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath
Satan filled thy heart to ¹ lie to the Holy Ghost, and to
4 keep back *part* of the price of the land? Whiles it remained,
did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it
not in thy power? How is it that thou hast conceived this
thing in thy heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto
5 God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down and
gave up the ghost: and great fear came upon all that heard
6 it. And the ² young men arose and wrapped him round,
and they carried him out and buried him.
- 7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when
8 his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And
Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land
9 for so much. And she said, Yea, for so much. But Peter
said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to
tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them
which have buried thy husband are at the door, and they
10 shall carry thee out. And she fell down immediately at
his feet, and gave up the ghost: and the young men came
in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried
11 her by her husband. And great fear came upon the whole
church, and upon all that heard these things.
- 12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and
wonders wrought among the people; and they were all
13 with one accord in Solomon's porch. But of the rest
durst no man join himself to them: howbeit the people
14 magnified them; ³ and believers were the more added to
15 the Lord, multitudes both of men and women; insomuch
that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid
them on beds and couches, that, as Peter came by, at the

¹ Or, *deceive*.

² Gr. *younger*.

³ Or, *and there were the more added to them, believing on the Lord*.

Acts v. 1-42

- 16 least his shadow might overshadow some one of them. And there also came together the multitude from the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing sick folk, and them that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.
- 17 But the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were
18 filled with jealousy, and laid hands on the apostles, and put
19 them in public ward. But an angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them out, and said,
20 Go ye, and stand and speak in the temple to the people
21 all the words of this Life. And when they heard *this*, they entered into the temple about daybreak, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison-house to have them brought.
- 22 But the officers that came found them not in the prison;
23 and they returned, and told, saying, The prison-house we found shut in all safety, and the keepers standing at the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.
- 24 Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were much perplexed concerning
25 them whereunto this would grow. And there came one and told them, Behold the men whom ye put in the prison
26 are in the temple standing and teaching the people. Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them, *but* without violence; for they feared the people, lest they
27 should be stoned. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest
28 asked them, saying, We straitly charged you not to teach in this name: and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon
29 us. But Peter and the apostles answered and said, We
30 must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree.
31 Him did God exalt ¹ with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of

¹ Or, *at*.

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32 sins. And we are witnesses ¹ of these ² things; ³ and so is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

33 But they, when they heard this, were cut to the heart,
34 and were minded to slay them. But there stood up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in honour of all the people, and commanded to
35 put the men forth a little while. And he said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves as touching
36 these men, what ye are about to do. For before these days rose up Theudas, giving himself out to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him,
37 were dispersed, and came to nought. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the enrolment, and drew away *some of the* people after him: he also perished; and
38 all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered abroad. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will be
39 overthrown: but if it is of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them; lest haply ye be found even to be fighting
40 against God. And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles unto them, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let
41 them go. They therefore departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to
42 suffer dishonour for the Name. And every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus *as* the Christ.

It is a testimony to Luke's honesty that he does not slur over the fact that there were abuses and scandals even in those early days. "The young men" (ver. 6) may have been public bearers or buriers (cf. Ezek.

¹ Some ancient authorities add *in him*.

² Gr. *sayings*.

³ Some ancient authorities read *and God hath given the Holy Ghost to them that obey him*.

Acts v. 1-42

xxxix. 12-16), who, when notified of a death, were charged with the duty of carrying the body out for burial, but we cannot be sure of this. To our minds the whole tone of the story seems unchristian. The sudden announcement to Sapphira of her husband's death is specially difficult to justify. But we must remember that it was commonly believed that sudden death might be merciful; Paul sentences the culprit at Corinth to death—"for the destruction of his flesh" (1 Cor. v. 5) must mean this—and evidently expects him to die, but he adds "that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord." 1 Pet. iv. 6 seems also to mean that there was a better chance for some sinners after death. Whatever theory of the cause of two such tragic deaths in so short a time we accept, it is clear that Luke thought that they were a "judgement." In ver. 11 we have the word "ecclesia" used of the Church for the first time in the Acts. It expresses the idea that the Church is the true successor of Israel, the people of God, and is used to distinguish the Christian community from the synagogue. It appears that the building in which Christians met was still called "the synagogue" in Palestine till the end of the first century at least, if not long afterwards. Strictly speaking, the Church is not a building, and we ought to find another name for the place where Christians meet for worship. The "Church" is rightly used in three senses: (a) the Christian community in any given place; (b) the whole company of believers in the world, or any part of them; (c) the company of believers on earth and in Heaven. There seems to be some lack of continuity

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in ver. 13; if "no one of the rest dared to join them," why should they be so popular? Pallis emends to "But no one of the Levites dared to interfere with them." It is strange that in ver. 15 Luke employs a word for "beds" which he laboriously avoids in Luke v. 18 ff., though he is using Mark there, and Mark has it; he seems to have become less particular about avoiding colloquial expressions as he proceeded, or perhaps he thought that a soldier's bed with legs—that is what the word used by Mark means—was too cumbersome to let down through a hole in the roof! Luke does not actually *say* that people were healed by Peter's shadow, but that they believed they could be; this is quite likely.

"Which is the sect of the Sadducees" (ver. 17) should be translated "the *local* party of the Sadducees." In ver. 20 "life" is probably Luke's rendering of an Aramaic original which might also mean "salvation." In ver. 29 the "Western" text has: "And Peter answered and said to him, 'Whom is it right to obey? God, or man?' And he" (who? the high-priest?) "said, 'God.'" The point of Peter's short speech which follows is that the responsibility for the death of Jesus does rest on the priests. Notice the use of "tree" for Cross, and compare Gal. iii. 13; 1 Pet. ii. 24. Gamaliel was a Rabbi of the Liberal school of Hillel; his reasonableness is obvious in the speech attributed to him here. Surprise has been expressed that his pupil Saul of Tarsus was so much more bigoted than he was; but it is often the case that pupils copy everything in their teachers except their qualifying clauses. The doctrine preached by

Gamaliel is sound Pharisaic teaching; God is over all, and needs no help from men for the fulfilment of His purposes; all men must do is to obey, and leave the issue to Him. The Judas-Theudas question has been dealt with in the Introduction (§ 4). The "Western" text is attractive in vers. 38 f.: "And at this crisis, brethren, I say to you . . . without polluting your hands; for if this power (cf. iii. 12 and iv. 7) be of human will, its force will be destroyed; but if the power be of the will of God, you cannot destroy it, neither you, nor kings, nor tyrants."

§ 5. *Stephen's Arrest, Speech and Martyrdom*
(Chaps. 6 and 7)

- 1 Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the ¹ Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected
- 2 in the daily ministration. And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not ² fit that
- 3 we should forsake the word of God, and ³ serve tables.
- 3 ⁴ Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom
- 4 we may appoint over this business. But we will continue
- 5 stedfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and
- 6 Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.
- 7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the

¹ Gr. *Hellenists*.

² Gr. *pleasing*.

³ Or, *minister to tables*.

⁴ Some ancient authorities read *But, brethren, look ye out from among you*.

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disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, wrought great
9 wonders and signs among the people. But there arose
certain of them that were of the synagogue called *the*
synagogue of the Libertines, and of the Cyrenians, and of
the Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and Asia, disputing
10 with Stephen. And they were not able to withstand the
11 wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake. Then they
suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak
12 blasphemous words against Moses, and *against* God. And
they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes,
and came upon him, and seized him, and brought him
13 into the council, and set up false witnesses, which said,
This man ceaseth not to speak words against this holy
14 place, and the law: for we have heard him say, that this
Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change
15 the customs which Moses delivered unto us. And all that
sat in the council, fastening their eyes on him, saw his face
as it had been the face of an angel.

1 And the high priest said, Are these things so? And
2 he said,

Brethren and fathers, hearken. The God of glory
appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia,
before he dwelt in Haran, and said unto him,
3 Get thee out of thy land, and from thy kindred, and come
4 into the land which I shall shew thee. Then came he out
of the land of the Chaldæans, and dwelt in Haran: and
from thence, when his father was dead, *God* removed him
5 into this land, wherein ye now dwell: and he gave him
none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot
on: and he promised that he would give it to him in
possession, and to his seed after him, when *as yet* he had
6 no child. And God spake on this wise, that his seed should
sojourn in a strange land, and that they should bring them
into bondage, and entreat them evil, four hundred years.
7 And the nation to which they shall be in bondage will I
judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth,

Acts vi. 1-15; vii. 1-60

8 and serve me in this place. And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so *Abraham* begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac *begat* Jacob, and
 9 Jacob the twelve patriarchs. And the patriarchs, moved
 10 with jealousy against Joseph, sold him into Egypt: and God was with him, and delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom before Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his
 11 house. Now there came a famine over all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no
 12 sustenance. But when Jacob heard that there was corn
 13 in Egypt, he sent forth our fathers the first time. And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren;
 14 and Joseph's race became manifest unto Pharaoh. And Joseph sent, and called to him Jacob his father, and all his
 15 kindred, threescore and fifteen souls. And Jacob went down into Egypt; and he died, himself, and our fathers;
 16 and they were carried over unto Shechem, and laid in the tomb that Abraham bought for a price in silver of the
 17 sons of ¹ Hamor in Shechem. But as the time of the promise drew nigh, which God vouchsafed unto Abraham,
 18 the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, till there arose
 19 another king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. The same dealt subtilly with our race, and evil entreated our fathers, that ² they should cast out their babes to the end
 20 they might not ³ live. At which season Moses was born, and was ⁴ exceeding fair; and he was nourished three
 21 months in his father's house: and when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for
 22 her own son. And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; and he was mighty in his words and
 23 works. But when he was well-nigh forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of
 24 Israel. And seeing one *of them* suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, smiting the
 25 Egyptian: and he supposed that his brethren understood

¹ Gr. *Emmor*.

³ Gr. *be preserved alive*.

² Or, *he*.

⁴ Or, *fair unto God*.

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how that God by his hand was giving them ¹ deliverance;
26 but they understood not. And the day following he
appeared unto them as they strove, and would have set
them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye
27 wrong one to another? But he that did his neighbour
wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler
28 and a judge over us? Wouldest thou kill me, as thou
29 killedst the Egyptian yesterday? And Moses fled at this
saying, and became a sojourner in the land of Midian,
30 where he begat two sons. And when forty years were
fulfilled, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of
31 mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. And when Moses
saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to
32 behold, there came a voice of the Lord, I am the God of
thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of
33 Jacob. And Moses trembled, and durst not behold. And
the Lord said unto him, Loose the shoes from thy feet:
34 for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. I have
surely seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt,
and have heard their groaning, and I am come down to
deliver them: and now come, I will send thee into Egypt.
35 This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a
ruler and a judge? him hath God sent *to be* both a ruler
and a ² deliverer with the hand of the angel which appeared
36 to him in the bush. This man led them forth, having
wrought wonders and signs in Egypt, and in the Red sea,
37 and in the wilderness forty years. This is that Moses,
which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall
God raise up unto you from among your brethren, ³ like
38 unto me. This is he that was in the ⁴ church in the wilder-
ness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai,
and with our fathers: who received living oracles to give
39 unto us: to whom our fathers would not be obedient,
but thrust him from them, and turned back in their hearts
40 unto Egypt, saying unto Aaron, Make us gods which shall
go before us: for as for this Moses, which led us forth out

¹ Or, *salvation*.

³ Or, *as he raised up me*.

² Gr. *redeemer*

⁴ Or, *congregation*.

- of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.
- 41 And they made a calf in those days, and brought a sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their hands.
- 42 But God turned, and gave them up to serve the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets,
 Did ye offer unto me slain beasts and sacrifices
 Forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?
- 43 And ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch,
 And the star of the god Rephan,
 The figures which ye made to worship them:
 And I will carry you away beyond Babylon.
- 44 Our fathers had the tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness, even as he appointed who spake unto Moses, that he should make it according to the figure that he
- 45 had seen. Which also our fathers, in their turn, brought in with ¹ Joshua when they entered on the possession of the nations, which God thrust out before the face of our fathers,
- 46 unto the days of David; who found favour in the sight of
- 47 God, and asked to find a habitation for the God of Jacob. But
- 48 Solomon built him a house. Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in *houses* made with hands; as saith the prophet,
- 49 The heaven is my throne,
 And the earth the footstool of my feet:
 What manner of house will ye build me? saith the Lord:
 Or what is the place of my rest?
- 50 Did not my hand make all these things?
- 51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did,
- 52 so do ye. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they killed them which shewed before of the coming of the Righteous One; of whom ye have now
- 53 become betrayers and murderers; ye who received the law
² as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not.
- 54 Now when they heard these things, they were cut to the
- 55 heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he,

¹ Gr. *Jesus*.

² Or, *as the ordinance of angels*. Gr. *unto ordinances of angels*.

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being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven,
and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right
56 hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened,
and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.
57 But they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears,
58 and rushed upon him with one accord ; and they cast him
out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid
down their garments at the feet of a young man named
59 Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *the Lord*,
60 and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled
down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin
to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

The appointment of "the seven" raises several difficult questions. "Hellenists" (ver. 1) is generally interpreted as "Greek-speaking," and this may be correct. In Jerusalem strict Jews boycotted the use of Greek, and cultivated Aramaic as keen Welshmen cling to Welsh. It would appear from Acts xii. 17 that, a little later on, there were two places where Christians in Jerusalem were meeting. It is quite likely that in this passage we have the first beginning of a division between more conservatively Jewish and more radical sections of the Church. Apparently there was a daily distribution from the common funds of the Church to poor women who were dependent on such charity, and the idea got abroad that favour was being shewn to those who belonged to the Aramaic-speaking group. The "Seven" were meant to be financial officials, though some of them did not confine themselves to £ s. d. It is interesting to observe that in only one case is the place from which one of them came mentioned; he is the last—"Nicolas, a proselyte of *Antioch*."

Whether Luke was an Antiochean or not (see Introduction), his interest in Antioch is everywhere evident. The idea that Nicolas, like Judas, fell away, and became the founder of "the sect of the Nicolaitans" (Rev. ii. 15) is only a conjecture. In ver. 6 we should notice that the Church as a whole nominated, and the apostles confirmed the nomination by ordination. The laying on of hands was already a Jewish custom, both in healing the sick (cf. Jas. v. 14; Mark vi. 13) and in the reception of "candidates for the ministry" by the Rabbis. In ver. 7 we have the statement that "a large crowd of the *priests* became obedient to the faith." It is held by some—the present writer included—that "the disciple whom Jesus loved"—whose testimony lies behind the Fourth Gospel—was not John the son of Zebedee, but a young priest; if so it is tempting to guess that his work among his old confrères was yielding fruit; he had been told, according to John xxi. 22, to "stay where he was," while Peter was to follow (*i.e.* become an itinerant missionary and ultimately a martyr). In this connexion the appearance of a "John" among the kindred of the high-priest (iv. 6) in the Received Text is interesting. If Peter and the other John (the son of Zebedee) saw a friend on the bench, we can understand their boldness and also (possibly) their escape from prison. Jesus had a disciple who was a friend of the high-priest (John xviii. 15), and "many of the rulers believed on Him" (John xii. 42). The feebleness of the chief-priestly caste in dealing with the Church needs some explaining; perhaps this accounts for it.

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“Grace” in Luke’s writings seems sometimes to mean human “charm” rather than God’s “undeserved favour,” as in Paul’s epistles (cf. Luke iv. 22, “they wondered at the charming words that came out of His mouth”); so it may be here. “The synagogue that was called that of the Libertines and Cyrenians and Alexandrians and those from Cilicia and Asia” (ver. 9) is a rather puzzling phrase. Jews from different parts of the empire appear to have worshipped in separate synagogues in Jerusalem, but we should not have expected people from places so widely apart as Cyrene (North Africa) and Asia to be grouped in one synagogue; still less that “Libertines” (“freedmen”) should appear along with a number of place-names. Beza’s conjecture (“Libystines,” *i.e.* “Lybians,” for “Libertines”) is very attractive, for Lybia is constantly associated with Cyrene. The new Lake-Cadbury Commentary takes the sentence as follows: “the synagogue which is called that of the freedmen—both Cyrenians, etc.” There were, of course, many freedmen of Jewish birth in the Roman Empire; indeed, Saul of Tarsus’ parents probably belonged to this class. The mention of Cilicia among the places from which those attending the synagogue came at once makes us think of Saul; perhaps this is his first appearance. Jews of the dispersion were obviously the bitterest opponents of the Church, and Stephen carried the war into the enemies’ camp. It is noticeable that the charge against him is the same as the charge against Jesus; he was, they said, against the Temple. There was evidently, to judge by Stephen’s speech, some foundation for the

accusation in his case (cf. also Mark xiv. 58). Peter and the others were devout worshippers in the Temple, attending regularly at the hours of prayer; Stephen, like his Master, was more radical, and was definitely opposed to the sacrificial system. In ver. 15 the "Western" text adds "standing in the midst of them" to "the face of an angel."

The Outline of Argument.

Stephen's long recapitulation of O.T. history contains two main ideas, both of them exceedingly provocative to his audience. They are: (1) The Jews have always been rebellious; (2) God does not live in temples, and His presence is not confined to sacred places. These points are developed in a narrative of Jewish history, in which the chief points of interest are slight variations from the text of the O.T. (*e.g.* according to Gen. xi. 27 ff. the call of Jehovah came to Abraham *after* he had removed to Haran—which is *outside the Holy Land*—according to Acts *before* that date; Philo agrees with Stephen against Genesis here). Ver. 42 presents a peculiar problem. The original Hebrew of Amos v. 25 ff. runs: "But ye have carried Sikkuth your king, and the star-images of Chiun your god, which ye made for yourselves; therefore I will carry you beyond *Damascus*." The Greek version (known to scholars as the LXX) read Sikkuth as meaning "tabernacle," "your king" as the god "Moloch," and (apparently) "Chiun" as "Raiphan." But where does the "beyond *Babylon*" of Stephen's speech come from? This is an unsolved

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problem. The "Western" text reads "to the regions of Babylon," which is not incompatible with "beyond Damascus." In ver. 53 the fact that, according to current Jewish ideas, though not according to the O.T., the law was given by "angels," is used as an argument for its *greatness*; in Gal. iii. 19, on the other hand, Paul uses it as a proof that the law was *inferior* to the promise, which God gave Himself to Abraham. It will be noticed that Stephen never refers to Jesus at all till the end of his speech. Indeed, his subject-matter is altogether different from that of either Peter or Paul's speeches, involving as it does a thorough-going attack on Judaism rather than merely an impeachment of that generation of Jews for the murder of Jesus. Of course, it is possible that the speech, if it had ever been finished, would have contained references to more specifically Christian matters, such as the Resurrection and the Second Coming; as it stands, the fact that it is so unlike other speeches in Acts is a strong argument for its authenticity. One idea that pervades the speech is so native to the whole Bible that it deserves special attention.

The belief that the truly religious man does not settle in any one place, but is a wanderer, runs through the whole Bible in both Testaments like a silver thread; its best exposition can be found in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Cain's sacrifice is rejected, and Abel's accepted, simply because Cain is a farmer, and Abel a shepherd who lives in the wilderness. So Enoch goes on his travels, and Noah builds an ark; Abraham dwells in tents, and Jacob

Acts vi. 1-15; vii. 1-60

has his pilgrim-staff in his hand even on his death-bed. Moses begins his travels as a baby, and, when grown up, flees from Egypt to the wilderness, taking his people with him. The prophets trace the decline of Israel to the time when they *settled down* in the promised land, and worshipped the Baals or gods of the farm-yard instead of the God of Sinai *in the wilderness*. Jehovah travels, too, in the ark, and will not settle down in a Temple. I can testify from conversation with the Bedaween of Palestine to-day, that the idea still persists. We cannot be surprised that Stephen's speech wounded his hearers, but their treatment of the orator was inexcusable.

It was indeed rather a lynching than an execution. Stoning for blasphemy should have been, according to their own regulations, a solemn judicial act. A man should have been posted at the gates of the Hall of hewn stone, where it was enacted that a properly conducted trial should first take place, mounted on horseback, and with a white handkerchief in his hand, so that, if at the last moment a witness for the defence came up, he might wave to the man who held the garments of the defendant—the place of stoning was to be in sight of the court, though outside the city-gates—and the stoning might be stopped. But we are in the same difficulty here as with the trial of Jesus; we cannot be sure that these regulations were in force at this period. In any case, it is clear that this was a case of sudden murderous passion, and it would have been impossible if there had been a Roman governor in Jerusalem; it probably occurred after the recall of Pilate, and before the arrival of his successor.

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Two other points deserve mention. It is tempting, with F. C. Conybeare, to emend "their garments" (ver. 58) to "his (*i.e.* 'Stephen's') garments," for we know that an official of the Sanhedrin was appointed to hold the garments of the prisoner; there seems to be no particular reason why the people who did the stoning should remove *their* garments. The other is, that in Stephen's dying words we have the only use outside the Gospels of our Lord's title for Himself ("the Son of Man")—the phrase in Rev. i. 13 is quite different. Stephen is evidently quoting the saying underlying Mark xiv. 62; Matt. xxvi. 64; Luke xxii. 69; but here "the Son of Man" is "standing"—not "sitting"—*to welcome Stephen*. "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," reminds us of Luke xxiii. 34 ("Father, forgive them") and "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" of Luke xxiii. 46. Jesus is to Stephen what the Father is to Jesus.

§ 6. *The Spread of the Gospel to Samaria and the Adventures of Philip, the Second of the Seven* (Chap. 8)

1 AND Saul was consenting unto his death.

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and
2 Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men buried
3 Stephen, and made great lamentation over him. But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

4 They therefore that were scattered abroad went about
5 preaching the word. And Philip went down to the city of
6 Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ. And the multitudes gave heed with one accord unto the things that

Acts viii. 1-40

were spoken by Philip, when they heard, and saw the signs
7 which he did. ¹ For *from* many of those which had unclean
spirits, they came out, crying with a loud voice: and
many that were palsied, and that were lame, were healed.
8 And there was much joy in that city.
9 But there was a certain man, Simon by name, which
beforetime in the city used sorcery, and amazed the ² people
10 of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: to
whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest,
saying, This man is that power of God which is called
11 Great. And they gave heed to him, because that of long
12 time he had amazed them with his sorceries. But when
they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the
kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were
13 baptized, both men and women. And Simon also himself
believed: and being baptized, he continued with Philip;
and beholding signs and great ³ miracles wrought, he was
amazed.
14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard
that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto
15 them Peter and John: who, when they were come down,
prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:
16 for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they had
17 been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid
they their hands on them, and they received the Holy
18 Ghost. Now when Simon saw that through the laying
on of the apostles' hands the ⁴ Holy Ghost was given, he
19 offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that
on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy
20 Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy silver perish with
thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God
21 with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this ⁵ matter:
22 for thy heart is not right before God. Repent therefore of
this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the

¹ Or, *For many of those which had unclean spirits that cried with a loud voice came forth.*

² Gr. *nation.*

⁴ Some ancient authorities omit *Holy.*

³ Gr. *powers.*

⁵ Gr. *word.*

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- 23 thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee. For I see that thou ¹ art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.
- 24 And Simon answered and said, Pray ye for me to the Lord, that none of the things which ye have spoken come upon me.
- 25 They therefore, when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.
- 26 But an angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go ² toward the south unto the way that goeth
- 27 down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the same is desert. And he arose and went: and behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians who was over all her treasure, who had come to Jerusalem
- 28 for to worship; and he was returning and sitting in his
- 29 chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this
- 30 chariot. And Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, Understandest thou what
- 31 thou readeſt? And he said, How can I, except some one shall guide me? And he besought Philip to come up and
- 32 sit with him. Now the place of the scripture which he was reading was this,
- He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;
And as a lamb before his shearer is dumb,
So he openeth not his mouth:
- 33 In his humiliation his judgement was taken away:
His generation who shall declare?
For his life is taken from the earth.
- 34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some
- 35 other? And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from
- 36 this scripture, preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be

¹ Or, wilt become gall (or, a gall root) of bitterness and a bond of iniquity.

² Or, at noon.

Acts viii. 1-40

38 baptized?¹ And he commanded the chariot to stand still:
and they both went down into the water, both Philip and
39 the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they came up
out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip;
and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way
40 rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing
through he preached the gospel to all the cities, till he came
to Cæsarea.

The "pious" men who buried Stephen and mourned over him were probably Jews, not Christians; they disapproved of such arbitrary proceedings. The "apostles" do not seem to have been touched by the persecution which followed Stephen's death, for they were able to stay in Jerusalem; probably Peter and James were regarded still as loyal Jews.

"A city of Samaria" (ver. 5) was perhaps Gitta, with which Justin Martyr connects Simon Magus. "The Power of God" probably means simply "God" (ver. 10—cf. Mark xiv. 62, "sitting at the right hand of the Power"). Jews and Samaritans were accustomed to using reverent evasions of the name "God," like "the Peace," "the Place," "the Highest." They did not mean that Simon was God, but that God was at work in him. Samaritans were notorious for their interest in magic. If John the son of Zebedee is meant in ver. 14—as is generally supposed—this is the last reference to him in the Acts. He had been one of the two who wished to call down fire from Heaven on these very Samaritans (Luke ix. 54)! It should be noticed that ver. 16 implies that the

¹ Some ancient authorities insert, wholly or in part, ver. 37 *And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*

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Holy Spirit did not inevitably come upon baptized believers; that is communicated by the laying on of the hands of the apostles. Ver. 23 means in modern language: "I see you are still an unconverted reprobate." Peter's scorn of money comes out here as in Acts iii. 6; it seems likely that he set the tone of the Church at Jerusalem in this matter. Trying to buy ecclesiastical office with money is, of course, still called "simony."

Justin Martyr tells us that Simon went to Rome, and that a statue was erected in his honour on the Tiber between two bridges; the last detail is probably a mistake, for a monument "to *Semo* the holy" was unearthed on the Tiber in the sixteenth century. "*Semo*" was an old Italian god. We need not follow the long thread of tradition relating to Simon here, but it is clear that he was a real character, and perhaps the first heretic in the history of the Church. The strangest thing about him is that, in the pseudo-Clementine anti-Pauline literature of the second century, *Paul* is made to figure as Simon, and his offer of money for the power to give the Holy Spirit is made to correspond with Paul's generous gift of help from the Gentile Churches to the Church in Jerusalem! To such depths can sectarian animosity sink!

In the "Western" text Simon appears as a much less resolute and dangerous character, for it reads in ver. 24, "Simon, who never stopped weeping the whole time." This sounds true to type; Simon was the kind of neurotic and emotional "psychic" with whom we are familiar enough in modern life.

Acts viii. 1-40

“Southwards”—not “at noon”—is probably the correct rendering of the original in ver. 26. There were two places called “Gaza” at this period. Old or desert Gaza was two and a half miles from the sea, but it had been destroyed by Alexander the Great, and was now only a ruin; New Gaza was by the sea. “Candace” (ver. 27) is not a name, but a title, like Pharaoh; perhaps it belonged to the queen-mother, who was the real head of the government. “Ethiopia” means here what we mean by “Upper Egypt.” The chariot was probably an ox-wagon, so that Philip would have no difficulty in keeping up with it; the eunuch would almost certainly be reading aloud. “To worship” means “on pilgrimage.” This is the most detailed identification of Jesus with “the suffering servant of God” in Isa. liii. that we have, but no one knows exactly what ver. 33 here—or for that matter, Isa. liii. 8, from which it is taken—really means. A well by the roadside is still shewn as the place where Philip baptized the eunuch; it is certainly on the right road, but we cannot be sure. In ver. 39 the “Western” text reads: “the Holy Spirit fell on the eunuch, and an angel of the Lord seized Philip.” We should say that Philip fell into a walking trance, and found himself at Azotus (the O.T. Ashdod) when he came out of it. There are many parallels to this experience.

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§ 7. *The Conversion of Paul and more Adventures of Peter* (Chap. 9)

- 1 But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against
2 the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and
asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that
if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or
3 women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. And as
he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto
Damascus: and suddenly there shone round about him a
4 light out of heaven: and he fell upon the earth, and heard
a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou
5 me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he *said*,
6 I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: but rise, and enter
into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must
7 do. And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless,
8 hearing the ¹ voice, but beholding no man. And Saul arose
from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw
nothing; and they led him by the hand, and brought him
9 into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and
did neither eat nor drink.
- 10 Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named
Ananias; and the Lord said unto him in a vision, Ananias.
11 And he said, Behold, I *am here*, Lord. And the Lord *said*
unto him, Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight,
and inquire in the house of Judas for one named Saul, a
12 man of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth; and he hath seen
a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands on
13 him, that he might receive his sight. But Ananias answered,
Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how much evil
14 he did to thy saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority
from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name.
15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a ² chosen
vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and
16 kings, and the children of Israel: for I will shew him how
17 many things he must suffer for my name's sake. And

¹ Or, *sound*.

² Gr. *vessel of election*.

Acts ix. 1-43

Ananias departed, and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be
18 filled with the Holy Ghost. And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and he
19 arose and was baptized; and he took food and was strengthened.

And he was certain days with the disciples which were
20 at Damascus. And straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus, that he is the Son of God. And all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that in Jerusalem made havock of them which called on this name? and he had come hither for this intent, that he might bring
22 them bound before the chief priests. But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the Christ.

23 And when many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel together to kill him: but their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates also day and night that they
25 might kill him: but his disciples took him by night, and let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket.

26 And when he was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him,
27 and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in
28 the name of Jesus. And he was with them going in and going out at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord: and he spake and disputed against the ¹ Grecian
30 Jews; but they went about to kill him. And when the brethren knew it, they brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

31 So the church throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being ² edified; and, walking ³ in the fear of the Lord and ³ in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, was multiplied.

¹ Gr. *Hellenists*.

² Gr. *builded up*.

³ Or, *by*

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- 32 And it came to pass, as Peter went throughout all parts,
he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda.
33 And there he found a certain man named Æneas, which had
34 kept his bed eight years; for he was palsied. And Peter
said unto him, Æneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise, and
35 make thy bed. And straightway he arose. And all that
dwelt at Lydda and in Sharon saw him, and they turned to
the Lord.
- 36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha,
which by interpretation is called ¹ Dorcas: this woman was
37 full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. And it
came to pass in those days, that she fell sick, and died: and
when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper
38 chamber. And as Lydda was nigh unto Joppa, the disciples,
hearing that Peter was there, sent two men unto him,
39 intreating him, Delay not to come on unto us. And Peter
arose and went with them. And when he was come, they
brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows
stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments
40 which Dorcas made, while she was with them. But Peter
put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and
turning to the body, he said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened
41 her eyes; and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave
her his hand, and raised her up; and calling the saints and
42 widows, he presented her alive. And it became known
43 throughout all Joppa: and many believed on the Lord. And
it came to pass, that he abode many days in Joppa with one
Simon a tanner.

The Christians whom Paul hoped to bring "bound" from Damascus to Jerusalem were probably fugitives from that city, some of whom had taken refuge in Damascus. The Roman Government had given the high-priest the right of deportation from other cities of citizens of Jerusalem who were charged with

¹ That is, *Gazelle*.

offences, for trial in Jerusalem. Neither the Sanhedrin nor the high-priest would have any power over Jews in Damascus, unless they really belonged to Jerusalem. There are three accounts of Paul's conversion in the Acts; they are Acts ix. 1 ff.; xxii. 6 ff.; xxvi. 12 ff. In all three there are slight discrepancies, which can be classified as follows: (1) In Acts ix. 7 Paul's companions hear the voice, but see no one; in Acts xxii. 9 they see the light, but "did *not* hear the voice of him who spoke to me." (2) In Acts ix. 7 they *stand*; in xxvi. 14 they *fall* to the ground with Paul. (3) In Acts xxii. Ananias gives Paul his commission; in Acts xxvi. he disappears out of the narrative altogether. With the last difference we have dealt already (Introduction, § 9). The other two are not serious; the grammar of the original Greek suggests that the companions heard the sound of the voice, but did not hear what it said. As to (2), these slight differences in the telling of a story are almost inevitable, and only confirm its genuineness; it is only in fiction that every detail can be made to fit in exactly with every other. Luke is obviously writing freely, and does not look back from one account to the other to make sure that he has not contradicted himself.

Apparent discrepancies between the narrative in Acts of the events which followed Paul's conversion, as compared with his own statements in Galatians and 2 Corinthians, have been dealt with in the Introduction (§ 9). We may perhaps reconstruct the story as follows: Paul was led into Damascus by his companions, and taken to "Straight" Street—

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still one of the main streets through the city, though its buildings suffered severely in the French bombardment a few years ago. There he was found by a Jewish Christian named Ananias, who had been commissioned to interview him. The result was that his sight was restored, and he began to preach in the synagogues at once. In a little while his activities became so objectionable to the Jews—we cannot wonder at their resentment, for it had been a very sudden conversion—that he left the city for “Arabia,” by which term is probably meant the country to the south and east of Damascus inhabited by the Nabatean Arabs. Their “sheikh” was Aretas, whose daughter Herod Antipas had divorced when he married Herodias. This would be Saul’s first experience of missionary preaching to Gentiles, and it apparently produced such an impression that, when he returned to Damascus, Aretas sent his ethnarch to watch the gates to catch him as he came out. But he succeeded in slipping out through a hole in the wall, and got safely to Jerusalem, where for some time he was viewed with suspicion by the Christians whom he had persecuted—this was natural, as they might well be afraid that he was simply acting as an *agent provocateur*—till Barnabas proved a good friend to him, and introduced him to the apostles. He preached energetically for some time in Jerusalem, until Jewish opposition forced his departure. He went home to Tarsus, and disappears from our sight for eleven years; it was perhaps during this time that he suffered the loss of all things (Phil. iii. 8), and was scourged five times in the synagogue (2 Cor. xi. 24). But Barnabas again

Acts ix. 1-43

befriended him, and brought him to Antioch, where he settled for some time (Acts xiii. 1) as a leader of the Church, and had his famous altercation with Peter (Gal. ii. 11 ff.).

The section which begins here (ver. 32) and is continued in chaps x. and xi. 1-18, appears itself to be a continuation of viii. 25, where Peter is last mentioned. It is tempting to explain the rather vague "through all" of ver. 32 as referring to "the many villages of the Samaritans" mentioned in viii. 25 as the scene of Peter's preaching (Lake). Lydda is the place where, according to tradition, St George killed the dragon, and Perseus rescued Andromeda—probably these are two versions of the same legend. The Messiah, so it is locally believed, is to kill the Anti-Christ at the gates of Lydda. "Make thy bed" (ver. 34) should probably be "get yourself something to eat." The next story, located at Joppa, is very interesting, as it is so like the story of Mark v. 37 ff.; Luke viii. 51 ff., and yet so different. A little girl of twelve years old is raised there, and here a grown woman. Strangely enough, the name appears to be the same in both cases, for Tabitha and Talitha are probably two forms of the same name—it means "My gazelle." Was it the same woman? Peter imitates his Master closely, putting the mourners out before he goes into the sick-room, and calling her by her name: "Tabitha, arise" = "Talitha cum" (Mark v. 41), but he does not take his patient by the hand, as Jesus did, until she sat up. The little girl "got up and began to walk about" (Mark v. 42); the grown woman "sat up in bed, when she saw Peter."

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§ 8. *Peter the Pioneer and the Foundation of the Church at Syrian Antioch* (Chaps. 10 and 11)

- 1 Now *there was* a certain man in Cæsarea, Cornelius by
name, a centurion of the band called the Italian ¹ band,
2 a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house,
who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God
3 alway. He saw in a vision openly, as it were about the
ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in unto him,
4 and saying to him, Cornelius. And he, fastening his eyes
upon him, and being affrighted, said, What is it, Lord?
And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are
5 gone up for a memorial before God. And now send men to
6 Joppa, and fetch one Simon, who is surnamed Peter: he
lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the
7 sea side. And when the angel that spake unto him was
departed, he called two of his household-servants, and a
8 devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; and
having rehearsed all things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.
9 Now on the morrow, as they were on their journey, and
drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop
10 to pray, about the sixth hour: and he became hungry, and
desired to eat: but while they made ready, he fell into a
11 trance; and he beholdeth the heaven opened, and a certain
vessel descending, as it were a great sheet, let down by four
12 corners upon the earth: wherein were all manner of four-
footed beasts and creeping things of the earth and fowls
13 of the heaven. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter;
14 kill and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never
15 eaten anything that is common and unclean. And a voice
came unto him again the second time, What God hath
16 cleansed, make not thou common. And this was done
thrice: and straightway the vessel was received up into
heaven.
17 Now while Peter was much perplexed in himself what
the vision which he had seen might mean, behold, the men

¹ Or, *cohort*.

Acts x. 1-48; xi. 1-30

that were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's
 18 house, stood before the gate, and called and asked whether
 19 Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodging there. And
 while Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him,
 20 Behold, three men seek thee. But arise, and get thee down,
 and go with them, nothing doubting: for I have sent
 21 them. And Peter went down to the men, and said, Behold,
 I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye
 22 are come? And they said, Cornelius a centurion, a righteous
 man and one that feareth God, and well reported of by
 all the nation of the Jews, was warned *of God* by a holy
 angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words
 23 from thee. So he called them in and lodged them.

And on the morrow he arose and went forth with them,
 and certain of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him.
 24 And on the morrow ¹ they entered into Cæsarea. And
 Cornelius was waiting for them, having called together his
 25 kinsmen and his near friends. And when it came to pass
 that Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell down at
 26 his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter raised him up,
 27 saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. And as he
 talked with him, he went in, and findeth many come
 28 together: and he said unto them, Ye yourselves know ² how
 that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to join
 himself or come unto one of another nation; and *yet* unto
 me hath God shewed that I should not call any man common
 29 or unclean: wherefore also I came without gainsaying,
 when I was sent for. I ask therefore with what intent ye
 30 sent for me. And Cornelius said, Four days ago, until this
 hour, I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house;
 and behold, a man stood before me in bright apparel,
 31 and saith, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms
 32 are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore
 to Joppa, and call unto thee Simon, who is surnamed Peter;
 he lodgeth in the house of Simon a tanner, by the sea side.
 33 Forthwith therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done

¹ Some ancient authorities read *he*.

² Or, *how unlawful it is for a man, &c.*

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that thou art come. Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord. And Peter opened his mouth, and said,

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him. ¹ The word which he sent unto the children of Israel, preaching ² good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all)—that saying ye yourselves know, which was published throughout all Judæa, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; *even* Jesus of Nazareth, how that God anointed him with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom also they slew, hanging him on a tree. Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is he which is ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead. To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed, were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

¹ Many ancient authorities read *He sent the word unto*.

² Or, *the gospel*.

Acts x. 1-48; xi. 1-30

1 Now the apostles and the brethren that were in Judæa
 heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of
 2 God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they
 that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying,
 3 Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat
 4 with them. But Peter began, and expounded *the matter*
 5 unto them in order, saying, I was in the city of Joppa
 praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, a certain vessel
 descending, as it were a great sheet let down from heaven
 6 by four corners; and it came even unto me: upon the
 which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw
 the fourfooted beasts of the earth and wild beasts and
 7 creeping things and fowls of the heaven. And I heard also
 8 a voice saying unto me, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. But I
 said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath
 9 ever entered into my mouth. But a voice answered the
 second time out of heaven. What God hath cleansed, make
 10 not thou common. And this was done thrice: and all were
 11 drawn up again into heaven. And behold, forthwith three
 men stood before the house in which we were, having been
 12 sent from Cæsarea unto me. And the Spirit bade me go
 with them, making no distinction. And these six brethren
 also accompanied me; and we entered into the man's
 13 house: and he told us how he had seen the angel standing
 in his house, and saying, Send to Joppa, and fetch Simon,
 14 whose surname is Peter; who shall speak unto thee words,
 15 whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house. And
 as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, even
 16 as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of
 the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with
 17 water; but ye shall be baptized ¹ with the Holy Ghost. If
 then God gave unto them the like gift as *he did* also unto us,
 when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I,
 18 that I could withstand God? And when they heard these
 things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying,
 Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance
 unto life.

¹ Or, *in*.

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- 19 They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phœnicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to
20 none save only to Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the ¹ Greeks also, preaching the Lord
21 Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great
22 number that believed turned unto the Lord. And the report concerning them came to the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas as far as
23 Antioch: who, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad; and he exhorted them all, ² that with
24 purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord: for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith:
25 and much people was added unto the Lord. And he went
26 forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul: and when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that even for a whole year they were gathered together ³ with the church, and taught much people; and that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.
27 Now in these days there came down prophets from
28 Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be a great famine over all ⁴ the world: which came to
29 pass in the days of Claudius. And the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send ⁵ relief unto the
30 brethren that dwelt in Judæa: which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

The importance of this story has been brought out in the Introduction (§ 7). The question for Peter was not, "Shall I preach to a Gentile?" but "Shall I eat Gentile food, and so cease to be a Jew,

¹ Many ancient authorities read *Grecian Jews*.

² Some ancient authorities read *that they would cleave unto the purpose of their heart in the Lord*.

³ Gr. *in*.

⁴ Gr. *the inhabited earth*.

⁵ Gr. *for ministry*.

in the strict sense of the word, at all?" Some great experience like this must have happened to him, for Paul makes it clear that Peter was on his side (Gal. ii. 15 ff.), and that is a sufficiently remarkable thing. The traditional view that Peter was a reactionary, while Paul was a radical, is unfair to both men. After his vision at Joppa, Peter became the first advocate of intimate and equal social relationships between Jewish and Gentile Christians; that he had a hard battle with his Jewish Christian friends is clear from Acts xi. 3 ff. Luke has rendered us a great service by making the real situation clear. Long before Paul fought his great fight for his Gentile converts Peter had championed their cause in the enemies' camp at Jerusalem, and again at the Council his is the deciding voice; he is the pioneer, not in the matter of *preaching* to a Gentile—Philip had done that—but of eating at his table; it is high time that justice was done to him. Perhaps the note in Mark vii. 19 ("making all kinds of diet clean") comes from Peter himself, as the result of the Joppa vision. The fact that Paul has to charge him with inconsistency later has obscured the real course of events; until a more relentless and uncompromising advocate of the claims of Gentile Christians appeared on the scene, Peter was their champion. It should be remembered that questions of diet loomed very large in the minds of all religious people in those days; when Paul said "The Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking" (Rom. xiv. 17), we might think his utterance a mere platitude, and say, "Whoever thought it was?" But nearly everybody in the world then thought that

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eating and drinking was a—we might almost say “the”—most important part of religion.

The fact that Cornelius was a “God-fearer” does not mean that he was a convert to Judaism, but simply that he was a worshipper of the God of Israel. The “Italian cohort” was probably “Cohors II Italica”; there is evidence that this cohort was stationed in Syria in A.D. 60–70, and for some time afterwards, and there is no reason for doubting whether it could have been in Cæsarea, the headquarters of the Roman Government in Palestine, when Peter was in Joppa. The distance between Cæsarea and Joppa is about thirty miles. A careful reading of the notes of time in the story would suggest that Cornelius’ vision was at 3 p.m. in the afternoon; the soldiers sent by him from Cæsarea set off next day for Joppa—it would be too late to start the same day, if they were to reach the tanner’s house before dark—and arrived about noon. Peter’s vision was at noon. The next day he set off for Cæsarea, and arrived before dark. In that case “the next day” of ver. 14 is the same day as “the next day” of ver. 13; in accordance with this reading of the timetable the “Western” text has “It is *three* days ago” for the “It is *four* days ago” of our version. In ver. 25 the same text reads: “And as Peter was approaching Cæsarea one of the slaves ran forward and announced his arrival”; this is either true—and how life-like it is!—or very intelligent commentary. How did Cornelius know when Peter was coming? Again, in ver. 26 it has the lively reading, “What are you doing? I also am a man, even as

you." Vers. 36 and 37 are very obscure in our text, and are not greatly improved in "Western" MSS. As it stands, the Greek is almost untranslatable; this is further evidence that Luke is not composing the speech himself; he would have made a much better job of it if he had been doing so! In ver. 48 it is interesting to notice that Peter did not baptize his converts himself (cf. Acts viii. 12; 1 Cor. i. 17; John iv. 2). Neither Jesus nor His apostles after the Resurrection nor Paul (normally) "administered the sacrament of Baptism" themselves; that was done by their assistants. In the New Testament "preaching the gospel," not administering Sacraments, was the proper work of the apostle.

It is important to notice (xi. 3) that Peter is charged not with preaching to Gentiles, but with *eating* with them; the question of circumcision was not raised yet. The saying of ver. 16 is attributed not to Jesus, but John the Baptist in the Gospels; the reference is to i. 5.

In vers. 19 ff. Luke takes up again his Antiochean source (see Introduction, § 11) which he dropped at ix. 30, and his narrative contains three episodes, all of great importance in the history of the Church; they are the evangelisation of Antioch (xi. 19-26), the famine-relief expedition to Judæa (xi. 27-30), the first missionary enterprise of the Church at Antioch (xiii. 1-14, 28). Antioch in Syria was situated about fifteen miles from the coast. It was founded by Seleucus, one of the successors of Alexander the Great, in 300 B.C., and was a combination of four cities, each with its own wall. Herod the

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Great gave the city a marble-paved street, which can still be traced, and it had a large Jewish population. Probably it was the third city in the Roman Empire; it certainly became the home of the mother-Church of Gentile Christianity. "Cypriotes and Cyrenians" make us think at once of Barnabas (a Cypriote)¹ and Lucius of Cyrene (Acts xiii. 1); men like these should have the credit of having been the first missionaries to Gentiles *on a large scale*, but their adventure would not have been undertaken if it had not been for the decisive action of Peter in the Cornelius incident. We shall discuss more fully the identity of these pioneers when we come to the crucial passage (Acts xiii. 1). It is interesting to observe that "Jesus is the Lord" is given as the kernel of their message. Peter had preached to Cornelius that Jesus was "*Judge of the living and the dead*" (x. 42); that was probably his interpretation of the title "Son of Man" which Jesus had so often in his hearing used of Himself. But now we are getting away from Jewish phraseology; in the Greek world there were "gods many and lords many." In such surroundings "Jesus the Judge" would naturally become "Jesus the Lord." In Antioch, ver. 26 tells us, the disciples were first called "Christians" (or "Chrestians," as it would be pronounced—see the Introduction, § 6). How seldom this familiar word occurs in the New Testament (1 Pet. iv. 16 and Acts xxvi. 28 are the only other examples). It is a Latinism, and means "partisans of Christ." "Christ" was obviously used as a proper name first in Gentile circles, and

¹ Barnabas did not actually arrive in Antioch till later (ver. 22).

Acts x. 1-48; xi. 1-30

Paul adopted this habit; so we speak of the "Life of Christ" when we mean "The Life of Jesus," really quite incorrectly.

Agabus appears again in xxi. 10; a "prophet" was evidently one who could at any moment become a channel by which the Holy Spirit could speak, and his message might just as well concern a matter of what we should call Church policy as be what we should call a religious address. It is important not to confuse the office of the early Christian prophet with that of the preacher or evangelist. In ver. 27 we have the most important "Western" reading in the whole of the Acts; it reads: "And there was much rejoicing; and, when *we* had been for some time in conversation, one of them," etc. This locates Luke at Antioch; there are many other suggestions that he was in some way connected with the Church there, but this is the oldest of them, and scholars have not attached as much importance to it as it deserves. The interest of the author in the Church at Antioch is surely obvious to every sympathetic reader, and this interest is most easily explained, if he had personal connexions with it; the onus of proof rests upon those who reject the tradition enshrined in this reading.

Suetonius (cf. Introduction, § 6) and Tacitus both bear witness to widespread famine in the provinces in the reign of Claudius; and Josephus (*Antiq.* iii. 15. 3, etc.) implies that it began in Palestine. The date would seem to be A.D. 46; ver. 28 suggests that the prophecy was made before the time of Claudius. If so, the collection would scarcely be taken long before the famine created the need for it, and the

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probability becomes greater that Luke has telescoped a series of events which really took two or three years to develop into a few verses, giving the impression that it all—the prophecy, the collection, the journey of Saul and Barnabas to Jerusalem—happened at once. This helps to make the view taken in the Introduction (§ 11)—that the visits of Saul to Jerusalem in Acts xi. 30; xv. 1 ff. really refer to the same occasion—more feasible. Ver. 30 suggests that the apostles were no longer in Jerusalem, for the collection is sent to “the elders”; this means that xi. 30 really refers to a later date than xii. 1–17, and is another pointer in the same direction.

§ 9. *The Martyrdom of James the Son of Zebedee, the Escape of Peter, and the Death of Herod Agrippa I* (Chap. 12)

1 Now about that time Herod the king put forth his hands
2 to afflict certain of the church. And he killed James the
3 brother of John with the sword. And when he saw that it
pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. And
4 *those* were the days of unleavened bread. And when he had
taken him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four
quaternions of soldiers to guard him; intending after the
5 Passover to bring him forth to the people. Peter therefore
was kept in the prison: but prayer was made earnestly of
6 the church unto God for him. And when Herod was about
to bring him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping
between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and guards
7 before the door kept the prison. And behold, an angel of
the Lord stood by him, and a light shined in the cell: and
he smote Peter on the side, and awoke him, saying, Rise up
8 quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And the
angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals.

Acts xii. 1-25

And he did so. And he saith unto him. Cast thy garment
9 about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed:
and he wist not that it was true which was done ¹ by the
10 angel, but thought he saw a vision. And when they were
past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron
gate that leadeth into the city; which opened to them of
its own accord: and they went out, and passed on through
one street; and straightway the angel departed from
11 him. And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I
know of a truth, that the Lord hath sent forth his angel
and delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the
12 expectation of the people of the Jews. And when he had
considered *the thing*, he came to the house of Mary the
mother of John whose surname was Mark; where many
13 were gathered together and were praying. And when he
knocked at the door of the gate, a maid came to answer,
14 named Rhoda. And when she knew Peter's voice, she
opened not the gate for joy, but ran in and told that Peter
15 stood before the gate. And they said unto her, Thou art
mad. But she confidently affirmed that it was even so.
16 And they said, It is his angel. But Peter continued knocking:
and when they had opened, they saw him, and were
17 amazed. But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to
hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had
brought him forth out of the prison. And he said, Tell
these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he
18 departed, and went to another place. Now as soon as it
was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what
19 was become of Peter. And when Herod had sought for
him, and found him not, he examined the guards, and
commanded that they should be ² put to death. And he
went down from Judæa to Cæsarea, and tarried there.
20 Now he was highly displeased with them of Tyre and
Sidon: and they came with one accord to him, and, having
made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, they asked
for peace, because their country was fed from the king's
21 country. And upon a set day Herod arrayed himself in

¹ Or, *through*.

² Gr. *led away to death*.

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- royal apparel, and sat on the ¹ throne, and made an oration
22 unto them. And the people shouted, *saying*, The voice of
23 a god, and not of a man. And immediately an angel of the
Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and
he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.
24 But the word of God grew and multiplied.
25 And Barnabas and Saul returned ² from Jerusalem, when
they had fulfilled their ministration, taking with them John
whose surname was Mark.

Unlike their other Idumean rulers, Herod Agrippa I was popular with the Jews; he was the son of Aristobulus, who was put to death in 7 B.C., and was the brother of Herodias. He had been educated at Rome, and in A.D. 23 Herod Antipas was induced by Herodias to give him a residence at Tiberias and a pension. However, he quarrelled with Antipas, and finally, after many adventures, reached Rome to find that the Emperor Tiberius would not see him until his huge debts to the treasury were paid; indeed he was in prison at the time of the emperor's death. Caligula, the next emperor, was a friend of Agrippa's, set him free, and gave him the tetrarchy of his uncle Philip, adding to it the territory of Lysanias. Herod arrived in Palestine as king shortly after A.D. 37, and soon succeeded in procuring the banishment of Herod Antipas and Herodias to Lyons in Gaul; their dominions were added to those of Agrippa.

Some scholars think that John the son of Zebedee was put to death along with James at this time; this idea is based on the authority of Georgius Hamartolos and Philip of Side (fourth century),

¹ Or, *judgement-seat*.

² Many ancient authorities read to *Jerusalem*.

who quote Papias (middle of first century A.D.) as having made this assertion. The Syriac martyrology also commemorates "John and James the apostles in Jerusalem" on the same day, the 27th of December. Mark x. 39 certainly seems to prophesy a martyr's death for both brothers, and this fact may well be the origin of the tradition. In the absence of evidence strong enough to compel its acceptance, we shall be well advised to regard the silence of the Acts on such a momentous event as the martyrdom of John the son of Zebedee as conclusive, for the fact that Luke tends to put John in front of James suggests at least that he regarded John as the more important of the brothers (Luke ix. 28; Acts i. 13).

In ver. 3 the implication of the text seems to be that the Passover followed the "days of unleavened bread"; as a matter of fact, it preceded them; perhaps Luke thought of the days of unleavened bread and the Passover as synonymous (cf. Luke xxii. 1); the Passover was killed on the fourteenth Nisan, the "days of unleavened bread" lasted from the fourteenth to the twenty-first. "Four quaternions of soldiers" means "four squads of four men each," one squad for each watch of three hours. Peter would be chained to one soldier, and the second would be on the other side; the two others of the four would be on duty at the door. Herod Agrippa himself, according to Josephus (*Antiq.* xviii. 6. 7), when a prisoner in Rome, had a soldier bound by a chain to him. It is not necessary to believe that this escape was miraculous; the word for "angel" and "messenger" are, in Greek, the same; but probably both Peter

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and the writer of the Acts regarded it as miraculous. Escapes from prison in the Near East are by no means as uncommon as in the West. Burkitt suggests that some unknown sympathiser—was it “the friend of the high-priest” who figures in John xviii. 15?—had drugged the soldiers and bribed the turnkey. Where was the prison? The tower of Antonia is the most likely place, but we cannot be sure. The “Western” text has a delightful reading in ver. 10: “they went down *the seven steps* and forward along one street.” It is quite probable that the prison was above the level of the street. In any case, this touch of realism could scarcely have been put in except by someone with knowledge of Jerusalem. We can almost hear the “angel” saying: “Take care, Peter; it’s very dark; one, two, three, etc.”

Ver. 12 suggests that Peter was in a maze; “when he had considered” means “when he had pulled himself together, and found his bearings.” If his escape was the result of a plot, neither he nor the Church was privy to it.

There is a tradition dating back to the fourth century that the house to which Peter went contained the Upper Room at which the Last Supper had been held. But it would appear that this house was *not* the headquarters of James and the Lord’s brethren (ver. 17); if so, it looks as if there were *two* houses in Jerusalem at which disciples met. There were evidently two Marys at least, one the mother of Jesus, who had adopted John as her son (John xix. 26), and the other Mary the mother of John (Mark). It is all very confusing, but the impression grows upon me

Acts xii. 1-25

that there were two establishments, both presided over by a Mary and a John! For John Mark in the N.T. see Col. iv. 10; Philem. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 11; 1 Pet. v. 13; as well as Acts xiii.; it seems to the present writer quite likely that Luke is using Marcan material here, as he does in the Gospel. The house in which Mark's mother lived was evidently a large one; it had a "porch" (ver. 13). Rhoda is a Greek name; she came to "answer the door" (R.V.). "His angel" means "his guardian angel" (cf. Matt. xviii. 10; Gen. xlvi. 16). It is interesting to notice that James, not Peter, is now the head of the Church at Jerusalem, and tempting to think that he had taken Peter's place while the latter was in prison; at any rate, Peter accepts the position, and goes "to another place." That may have been because it was no longer safe to stay in Jerusalem; we should conjecture that the "other place" was Antioch, if it were not that his name does not appear in xiii. 1. Tradition will have it that he went to Rome, called "another place" because Luke does not wish to draw the Government's attention to the fact that Peter was there. At any rate he is back in Jerusalem in Acts xv. 1 ff. (five years later?), and this fits Antioch better than Rome. Moreover, Gal. ii. 11 ff. associates Peter with Antioch, which claimed him as its first "bishop." We must remember that in Acts xii. Luke is going back in time, because he is picking up the threads of another source. The fact that the apostles are not mentioned in xi. 30 has been already noted as implying that they were no longer in Jerusalem.

Josephus also describes the death of Herod Agrippa

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I. as a divine judgement because he did not rebuke his flatterers; he says that it happened at a feast in honour of the emperor; he does not say, however, that he was eaten by worms—a traditional punishment for great men who were guilty of overweening pride; the date appears to have been A.D. 44.

The most likely reading of ver. 25 is not “*from* Jerusalem,” but (as R.V. margin) “*to* Jerusalem.” Dr Hort made sense of this by changing the order of the words and making the text read: “having completed their task in Jerusalem.” Lake thinks that the verse is put in to get the story into chronological order again, and make it clear that the visit to Jerusalem (A.D. 48–49) took place after the death of Herod. But surely John Mark should have travelled from Jerusalem to Antioch, not from Antioch to Jerusalem! Hort’s seems the most likely explanation. Ephrem the Syrian, whose commentary on the Acts is one of our authorities for the “Western” text, adds “and Luke the Cyrenian” (see the note on xiii. 1).

§ 10. *Paul’s First Missionary Journey* (Chaps. 13 and 14)

- 1 Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was *there*, prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-
- 2 brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I
- 3 have called them. Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.
- 4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, went down

5 to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. And
 when they were at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of
 God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John
 6 as their attendant. And when they had gone through the
 whole island unto Paphos, they found a certain ¹ sorcerer,
 7 a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-Jesus; which
 was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of under-
 standing. The same called unto him Barnabas and Saul, and
 8 sought to hear the word of God. But Elymas the ¹ sorcerer
 (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them,
 9 seeking to turn aside the proconsul from the faith. But Saul,
 who is also *called* Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, fastened
 10 his eyes on him, and said, O full of all guile and all villainy,
 thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt
 11 thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And
 now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou
 shalt be blind, not seeing the sun ² for a season. And
 immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and
 12 he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then
 the proconsul, when he saw what was done, believed, being
 astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

13 Now Paul and his company set sail from Paphos, and came
 to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departed from them and
 14 returned to Jerusalem. But they, passing through from
 Perga, came to Antioch of Pisidia; and they went into the
 15 synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. And after the
 reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the syna-
 gogue sent unto them, saying, Brethren, if ye have any word
 16 of exhortation for the people, say on. And Paul stood up,
 and beckoning with the hand said,

17 Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, hearken. The God
 of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people
 when they sojourned in the land of Egypt, and with a high
 18 arm led he them forth out of it. And for about the time of
 19 forty years ³ suffered he their manners in the wilderness. And

¹ Gr. *Magus*: as in Matt. ii. 1, 7, 16.

² Or, *until*.

³ Many ancient authorities read *bare he them as a nursing-father in the wilderness*. See Deut. i. 31.

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when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave *them* their land for an inheritance, for about four
20 hundred and fifty years: and after these things he gave *them*
21 judges until Samuel the prophet. And afterward they asked for a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for the space of forty
22 years. And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king; to whom also he bare witness, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my heart,
23 who shall do all my ¹ will. Of this man's seed hath God according to promise brought unto Israel a Saviour,
24 Jesus; when John had first preached ² before his coming
25 the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John was fulfilling his course, he said, What suppose ye that I am? I am not *he*. But behold, there cometh one after me, the shoes of whose feet I am not worthy to
26 unloose. Brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and those among you that fear God, to us is the word of this
27 salvation sent forth. For they that dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath, fulfilled *them*
28 by condemning *him*. And though they found no cause of death *in him*, yet asked they of Pilate that he should be
29 slain. And when they had fulfilled all things that were written of him, they took him down from the tree, and
30 laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead:
31 and he was seen for many days of them that came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses
32 unto the people. And we bring you good tidings of the
33 promise made unto the fathers, how that God hath fulfilled the same unto our children, in that he raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, Thou art my
34 Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he hath spoken on this wise, I will give you
35 the holy and sure *blessings* of David. Because he saith also in another *psalm*, Thou wilt not give thy Holy One to

¹ Gr. *wills*.

² Gr. *before the face of his entering in*.

Acts xiii. 1-52; xiv. 1-28

36 see corruption. For David, after he had ¹in his own generation served the counsel of God, fell on sleep, and was
 37 laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: but he whom
 38 God raised up saw no corruption. Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed
 39 unto you remission of sins: and by him every one that believeth is justified from all things, from which ye could
 40 not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest that come upon *you*, which is spoken in the prophets:

41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and ²perish;
 For I work a work in your days,
 A work which ye shall in no wise believe, if one declare it unto you.

42 And as they went out, they besought that these words
 43 might be spoken to them the next sabbath. Now when the synagogue broke up, many of the Jews and of the devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.

44 And the next sabbath almost the whole city was gathered
 45 together to hear the word of ³God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with jealousy, and contradicted the things which were spoken by Paul, and
 46 ⁴blasphemed. And Paul and Barnabas spake out boldly, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the
 47 Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*,

I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles,
 That thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth.

48 And as the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of ⁵God: and as many as were ordained to eternal
 49 life believed. And the word of the Lord was spread abroad
 50 throughout all the region. But the Jews urged on the

¹ Or, *served his own generation by the counsel of God, fell on sleep*;
 Or, *served his own generation, fell on sleep by the counsel of God.*

² Or, *vanish away.*

³ Many ancient authorities read *the Lord*.

⁴ Or, *railed.*

⁵ Many ancient authorities read *the Lord*.

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devout women of honourable estate, and the chief men of the city, and stirred up a persecution against Paul and
51 Barnabas, and cast them out of their borders. But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto
52 Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost.

1 And it came to pass in Iconium, that they entered together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great
2 multitude both of Jews and of Greeks believed. But the Jews that were disobedient stirred up the souls of the Gentiles,
3 and made them evil affected against the brethren. Long time therefore they tarried *there* speaking boldly in the Lord, which bare witness unto the word of his grace,
4 granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. But the multitude of the city was divided; and part held with
5 the Jews, and part with the apostles. And when there was made an onset both of the Gentiles and of the Jews with
6 their rulers, to entreat them shamefully, and to stone them, they became aware of it, and fled unto the cities of Lycaonia,
7 Lystra and Derbe, and the region round about: and there they preached the gospel.

8 And at Lystra there sat a certain man, impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked.
9 The same heard Paul speaking: who, fastening his eyes upon him, and seeing that he had faith to be ¹ made whole,
10 said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And
11 he leaped up and walked. And when the multitudes saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voice, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us
12 in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, ² Jupiter; and Paul, ³ Mercury, because he was the chief speaker. And the priest of ² Jupiter whose *temple* was before the city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have
14 done sacrifice with the multitudes. But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, they rent their garments, and sprang forth among the multitude, crying out and

¹ Or, *saved*.

² Gr. *Zeus*.

³ Gr. *Hermes*.

Acts xiii. 1-52; xiv. 1-28

15 saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like ¹ passions with you, and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all
16 that in them is: who in the generations gone by suffered
17 all the nations to walk in their own ways. And yet he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your
18 hearts with food and gladness. And with these sayings scarce restrained they the multitudes from doing sacrifice unto them.

19 But there came Jews thither from Antioch and Iconium: and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was
20 dead. But as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and entered into the city: and on the morrow he went
21 forth with Barnabas to Derbe. And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had made many disciples, they
22 returned to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must
23 enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom
24 they had believed. And they passed through Pisidia, and came
25 to Pamphylia. And when they had spoken the word in
26 Perga, they went down to Attalia; and thence they sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been committed to the
27 grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled. And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all things that God had done with them, and how that he had opened a door of faith unto the
28 Gentiles. And they tarried no little time with the disciples.

Few verses in the N.T. have so much interest crowded into them as xiii. 1. Who was "Simeon

¹ Or, *nature*

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who was called Niger? ” “ Niger ” means “ darkie,” and, specially as the next name on the list is “ Lucius the Cyrenian,” it is tempting to identify him with “ Simon of Cyrene ” (Luke xxiii. 26); Cyrene is in North Africa, and Simon may well have been very swarthy, if not actually a coloured man. Dr Deissmann maintained in the present writer’s hearing that “ Cyrenian ” might grammatically be taken with both names “ Simeon ” and “ Lucius,” and that Lucius was simply Luke’s Roman name (cf. the note from Ephrem mentioned under xii. 25). The difficulty about all this is that N.T. writers generally refrain from mentioning their own names, except when they are writing letters. We have already seen reason to associate Luke with Antioch, and if he was associated with Simon of Cyrene there we have at once a fascinating explanation of Luke’s Passion-story, clearly independent, as it is, of the others; no better witness could be found than Simon of Cyrene, who carried the Cross with Jesus! That Simon did become a well-known member of the Church is clear from Mark xv. 21. Manaen suggests another romantic story. He had been a “ companion ” of Herod Antipas; “ companion ” was a title of honour given to youths at court of the same age as a prince. The “ Western ” text appears to make Manaen an actual son of Herod the Great!

Josephus tells us that an older Manaen, an Essene—that is, one of a company of Jewish solitaries who lived in celibate communities in the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea—met the future Herod the Great in 50 B.C., and hailed him as the future king of the Jews. When

Herod became King in 37 B.C. he sent for this Manaen, who settled at court. His grandson or grand-nephew, also called Manaen, was brought up at court with Herod Antipas, and evidently became a disciple of Jesus. Here is another authority for Luke's stories in the Gospel; it is singular that there were three people of high rank in Herod's court associated in one way or another with Jesus—Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward (Luke viii. 3; xxiv. 10), the "nobleman" whose son was cured (John iv. 46), and Manaen; or was Chuza the "nobleman?" No wonder the tetrarch was interested in Jesus! (Luke xxiii. 8).

Seleucia (ver. 4) is the port of Antioch, Salamis the chief town of Cyprus. The fact that John Mark is called (ver. 5) the "attendant" reminds us of Luke i. 2, where Luke speaks of "those who became ministers" (*i.e.* "attendants") "of the word"; we are surely right in thinking that this is a definite reference to Mark. 2 Tim. iv. 11, and the fact that Papias describes Mark as fulfilling the same kind of office for Peter, suggest that this was his rôle. The sorcerer Bar-Jesus, whose name is "translated" Elymas, presents us with a problem. There is an Arabic word which resembles "Elymas," and means "wise man"; but why should a Jewish magician in Cyprus bear an obscure Arabic name, and why should Luke translate it for us into Arabic? Elymas cannot be a translation of Bar-Jesus (son of Jesus). The only solution of the problem comes, as usual, from the "Western" text which has: "Bar-Iesouan, which is translated Hetoimas." Hetoimas is nearly the same as the Greek word for "ready," and Bariesouan can be connected with

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a Semitic verb which means "to make ready." It is odd that, according to Josephus, a magician named "Atomos," also from Cyprus, acted as intermediary between Felix and Drusilla.

In ver. 9 the name by which Saul was henceforth to be known occurs for the first time. It is difficult to believe that Paul was snobbish enough to take his new name from his first distinguished convert. Perhaps a Paul-source begins here, or Luke is pointing out the curious coincidence between the name of the Christian apostle and the Roman governor ("who, strangely enough, was another Paul"). Chrysostom thought that it was Paul's name given him at ordination, as Simon had been called Peter by Jesus. Augustine attributed the name to Paul's modesty, for "paullus" means "little" ("I am the least of the apostles"). Otto has suggested that it is derived from a Hebrew root meaning "chosen." Before we leave the encounter with the magician, we ought to notice again the parallel with Peter and *his* encounter with a magician (Introduction, § 2).

In ver. 13 we cannot help noticing the obliteration of Barnabas; we need not ascribe it to any deliberate act on Paul's part; it was simply the effect of association with a personality so much stronger than his own. But it provides us with an amply sufficient explanation of Mark's desertion of the party! The charge of cowardice is a mere libel; perhaps it was already circulating when Mark wrote his Gospel, and that may be one reason why he told us the story of the adventurous young man—who must be Mark himself—in Mark xiv. 51! In ver. 14 Paul and Barnabas

enter the province of Galatia. As a matter of fact, Antioch of Pisidia was not *in* Pisidia, but *near* Pisidia; there was no province of Pisidia till much later. One is impressed with the broad-mindedness of the synagogue authorities in asking Paul to preach, before they knew whether his preaching would be orthodox or not; the fact that both Jesus and Paul were allowed the freedom of the synagogue reminds us that Judaism was not, generally speaking, intolerant. The office of "ruler of the synagogue" (cf. Mark v. 22; Luke viii. 41) was sometimes honorary, and might be held by women and children. Paul's speech at Pisidian Antioch is much on the same lines as that of Peter at Pentecost, though his approach to his main subject, the Messiahship of Jesus, is different. There are many obscurities in the speech, as is usual in the speeches reported in the first half of the Acts; this is an argument for their authenticity. For "suffered their manners" (ver. 18) many manuscripts substitute "nourished" (cf. Deut. i. 31, where the same variants are found); on the whole, it is the more likely reading of the two. In ver. 20 the R.V. makes the 450 years cover the period from the promise made to Abraham to the occupation of the land. The "Western" text, with the A.V., makes it refer to the period of the Judges. It is interesting to see that Paul takes care to bring in an earlier Saul also of the tribe of Benjamin (cf. Rom. xi. 1; Phil. iii. 5). The quotations in vers. 33 and 34 present some difficulties. According to the "Western" text of Luke iii. 22 "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee" was spoken by the

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voice from Heaven at the Baptism of Jesus; here it seems to refer to His Resurrection. The quotation in ver. 34 about "the holy and sure blessings promised to David" does not seem to the modern reader specially appropriate; the point is that the promise quoted in ver. 35 ("Thou wilt not give thy *holy* one to see corruption") must be transferred to someone else, so the important word is "you," and the connecting link is "holy." In vers. 38 f. we have an outline of Paul's teaching on "justification by faith." Paul's sermon on the next Sabbath evidently met with a less favourable reception; probably it was more definitely Christian. The reason for Jewish hostility to Paul was not so much theological, as the fact that this renegade Jew was drawing away from the synagogue Gentiles whose speedy conversion to orthodox Judaism was regarded as certain. "We turn to the Gentiles," does not mean, of course, that they had never preached to Gentiles before, or that they never preached to Jews again; it simply implies that the policy of concentrating upon the synagogue was to be given up for the time being.

Iconium is now called Konia, and was the junction of several roads. For "both together" we should probably read "in the same way" (*i.e.* "as at Antioch"); in spite of their declaration, Paul and Barnabas still began their work in the synagogue, as Paul continued to do at Corinth and Thessalonica. xiv. 2 and 3 read strangely in our versions; it is hard to see why *because* the Jews "stirred up the Gentiles," they should stay at Iconium a long time (ver. 3); their Master's command was "When you are persecuted in one city, flee to the next" (Matt.

x. 23). The difficulty is mitigated by transposing vers. 2 and 3, but the "Western" text avoids this by reading after ver 2 "But the Lord soon gave peace"; this seems likely.

However, the respite was of short duration, and the preachers thought it wise to go on to Lystra. The site of Lystra was discovered in 1885, but Derbe has not yet been identified. The healing of the lame man at Lystra (vers. 8 ff.) reminds us of the healing of the man at the beautiful gate, and is another parallel between Peter and Paul; Barnabas plays a passive rôle, as John had done in the earlier miracle. The fact that Zeus and Hermes were worshipped near Lystra has been confirmed by Professor W. M. Calder of Manchester, who found two Greek inscriptions in the neighbourhood, one of which refers to priests of Zeus, and the other is on a statue of Hermes with a sun-dial dedicated to Zeus (they date from the third century A.D.); but these cults must have been established before that. Barnabas was evidently the more dignified of the two missionaries, while Paul was the vivacious and clever one. The reason why the apostles were not quick enough to stop the preparations for sacrifice was obviously that they did not understand what the people were talking about; they did not know Lycaonian. In ver. 13 the "Western" text has "the priests of the *local* (cf. ch. v. 17) Zeus Propolis" (i.e. "defender of the city"); this is probably correct. The "garlands" (ver. 13) would be wooden fillets meant to decorate the sacrificial victims, the "gates" the doors of the house in which the missionaries were staying. Paul's speech at Lystra—delivered im-

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promptu, and much less elaborate than his synagogue discourses—is his first homily addressed to a purely Gentile audience in Acts, and follows more nearly the lines of his later speech at Athens; this is true to life. The fact that there is no reference in it to Jesus is no argument against its genuine character; it was probably never finished. The change in feeling described in ver. 19 seems very abrupt; the “Western” text gives us a more detailed account of the course of events: “these Jews persuaded the men not to believe in their teaching, saying that . . . they were liars at every point.” This is not very illuminating. In the 20th verse the “Western” text suggests that the disciples prevented any further attack, and adds “when at evening the mob went away, he got up.” The fickle character of the “Galatians,” as described in the epistle, harmonises well with the behaviour of the mob at Lystra; their accessibility to Jewish attacks upon Paul—the Jews were generally extremely unpopular in such towns—seems strange, but we have the same phenomenon in the epistle. “You received me as an angel from Heaven” reminds us forcibly of Paul’s experience here, for Hermes was the messenger (or “angel”) of the gods (Gal. iv. 14). “I bear branded in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus” (Gal. vi. 17) may be a reference to the scars left by this stoning. It is true that Acts makes no reference to any illness which led Paul to his tour in these Galatian towns—in Gal. iv. 13 Paul says that it was “because of weakness of the flesh” that he had first preached to them—but Paul did not say much to his friends about his illnesses, and Luke, who was *not*

in his company then, may never have heard of this attack. The river valleys of Asia Minor are infested with malaria, and it is quite probable that Paul was compelled to seek higher ground—these cities are on a high plateau—because of malaria contracted in the neighbourhood of Perga. “You did not despise nor shew your dislike” (literally “spit out”) “of the trial which my condition must have been to you” (Gal. iv. 14) fits in well with this supposition, for the natives in Asia Minor still consider the sight of anyone suffering from malaria unlucky, and spit to avert the omen. One cannot sufficiently admire the heroism of the apostle who went to Derbe to bring the good news with bandaged head and bruised and broken body, when scarcely recovered from a bout of acute malaria! That his experiences at Lystra left a deep mark on mind as well as body is suggested by 2 Tim. iii. 11. Attalia (ver. 25) now called Adalia, lies at the mouth of the Cataractes; Perga lies some distance inland.

§ 11. *The Council at Jerusalem* (Chap. 15)

- 1 And certain men came down from Judæa and taught the brethren, *saying*, Except ye be circumcised after the custom
- 2 of Moses, ye cannot be saved. And when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and questioning with them, *the brethren* appointed that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and
- 3 elders about this question. They therefore, being brought on their way by the church, passed through both Phœnicia and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and
- 4 they caused great joy unto all the brethren. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church

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and the apostles and the elders, and they rehearsed all things
5 that God had done with them. But there rose up certain
of the sect of the Pharisees who believed, saying, It is
needful to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep
the law of Moses.

6 And the apostles and the elders were gathered together
7 to consider of this matter. And when there had been much
questioning, Peter rose up, and said unto them,

Brethren, ye know how that ¹a good while ago God
made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles
8 should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God,
which knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them
9 the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and he made no
distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by
10 faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, that ye should
put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither
11 our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that
we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in
like manner as they.

12 And all the multitude kept silence; and they hearkened
unto Barnabas and Paul rehearsing what signs and wonders
13 God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. And after
they had held their peace, James answered, saying,

14 Brethren, hearken unto me: Symeon hath rehearsed how
first God did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people
15 for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets;
as it is written,

16 After these things I will return,
And I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is
fallen;

And I will build again the ruins thereof,

And I will set it up:

17 That the residue of men may seek after the Lord,
And all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called,

18 Saith the Lord, ²who maketh these things known from
the beginning of the world.

¹ Gr. *from early days*.

² Or, *who doeth these things* which were known.

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- 19 Wherefore my judgement is, that we trouble not them which
20 from among the Gentiles turn to God; but that we ¹ write
unto them, that they abstain from the pollutions of idols,
and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and
21 from blood. For Moses from generations of old hath in
every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues
every sabbath.
- 22 Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders,
with the whole church, to choose men out of their company,
and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*,
Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, chief men among the
23 brethren: and they wrote *thus* by them, The apostles and
the elder brethren unto the brethren which are of the
24 Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greeting: Foras-
much as we have heard that certain ² which went out from
us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls;
25 to whom we gave no commandment; it seemed good unto
us, having come to one accord, to choose out men and send
26 them unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men
that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord
27 Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas,
who themselves also shall tell you the same things by word
28 of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to
us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary
29 things; that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and
from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication;
from which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you.
Fare ye well.
- 30 So they, when they were dismissed, came down to
Antioch; and having gathered the multitude together, they
31 delivered the epistle. And when they had read it, they
32 rejoiced for the ³ consolation. And Judas and Silas, being
themselves also prophets, ⁴ exhorted the brethren with many
33 words, and confirmed them. And after they had spent
some time *there*, they were dismissed in peace from the

¹ Or, *enjoin them*.

² Some ancient authorities omit *which went out*.

³ Or, *exhortation*.

⁴ Or, *comforted*.

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35 brethren unto those that had sent them forth.¹ But Paul
and Barnabas tarried in Antioch, teaching and preaching
the word of the Lord, with many others also.
36 And after some days Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us
return now and visit the brethren in every city wherein we
37 proclaimed the word of the Lord, *and see* how they fare. And
Barnabas was minded to take with them John also, who was
38 called Mark. But Paul thought not good to take with them
him who withdrew from them from Pamphylia, and went
39 not with them to the work. And there arose a sharp con-
tention, so that they parted asunder one from the other,
and Barnabas took Mark with him, and sailed away unto
40 Cyprus; but Paul chose Silas, and went forth, being com-
41 mended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. And he
went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

The "Western" text makes "those who had come from Jerusalem order (ver. 2) Paul and Barnabas 'to go up to Jerusalem,' for Paul insisted that his converts should stay as they were when they were converted" (cf. 1 Cor. vii. 20), but the Revisers took the view that the Church at Antioch ("the brethren") *arranged* for them to go. It should be observed that, according to vers. 2 and 6 the apostles are now back in Jerusalem, and in full control. Even though circumcision for Gentile converts was the question which led to the council, the discussion actually turned upon the wider question of the conditions upon which social intercourse was practicable between Jewish and Gentile believers. Peter's position in ver. 10 is typical of the Galilean Jew; Galileans were considered lax by the zealots of Jerusalem in their observance of the law; undoubtedly the Pharisaic tradition was a burden to

¹ Some ancient authorities insert, with variations, ver. 34, *But it seemed good unto Silas to abide there.*

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the rank and file. But it is surprising to find James the Lord's brother taking the same liberal attitude. His quotation (in vers. 16 ff.) comes from Amos ix. 11 f., and his whole argument depends upon the Greek version of the O.T. (the LXX), and is not borne out by the Hebrew original. There are certain small coincidences between the speech of James and his epistle (cf. Acts xv. 17 with Jas. ii. 7), but they are not very important. More serious questions face us when we pass to the resolution proposed by James and passed by the meeting.

Could Paul have accepted a decree from headquarters which imposed a food-law upon his Gentile converts, and commended it to his Churches—the phrase “things strangled” of vers. 20 and 29 in the text of the English versions certainly implies this? His whole argument in Rom. xiv. and 1 Cor. viii. is based upon the doctrine that these are matters for the individual conscience to decide, with due regard to the scruples of others. In Gal. ii. he sharply rebukes Peter for going back to Jewish tabus after giving them up; could he have stultified his whole position by accepting dictation from Jerusalem on that very point? The “Western” text comes to our rescue with its omission of “things strangled” both in vers. 20 and 29 and in xxi. 25. With that omission, there is no difficulty. “Blood” means “the taking of life”; Paul would not have the smallest scruple about accepting such elementary moral regulations for his converts. Its correctness here is confirmed by the fact that a food-law was observed by the Churches of Gaul and North Africa in the second century, as Irenæus (Gaul) and

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Tertullian (North Africa) bear witness; yet neither of these fathers quotes these passages of Acts as its justification! They cannot then have had "things strangled" in their text. It is likely that the words were added in Alexandria, partly as an explanation of what "blood" was supposed to mean, and partly to justify a practice already in existence. One form of the "Western" text—though not another—adds to the text of the decree the words, "and they are not to do to others what they would not have done to them"—a negative version of the "golden rule" which is paralleled in the book of Tobit and the sayings of the liberal Rabbi Hillel.

For "Judas Barsabbas" (ver. 22) compare "Joseph Barsabbas" of i. 23; they may have been brothers. "Silas" appears in this context for the first time; the name is probably, though not quite certainly, short for Silvanus (1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1; 2 Cor. i. 19; 1 Pet. v. 12). Silas now takes the place of John Mark as Paul's companion. Whether the difference between Paul and Barnabas concerned Mark alone, we cannot be sure; perhaps the question of Gal. ii. 11 ff. came in too (cf. Gal. ii. 13), for Barnabas sympathised with Peter's attitude on the matter of intercourse between Jews and Gentiles in the Church, and indeed there is more to be said for it than is generally admitted by modern scholars.

§ 12. *Paul's Second Missionary Tour*

(Chaps. 16, 17, 18, vers. 1-22)

From Thessalonica to Athens

From Corinth to Ephesus

- 1 And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra: and behold,
a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of
2 a Jewess which believed; but his father was a Greek. The
same was well reported of by the brethren that were at
3 Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth
with him; and he took and circumcised him because of
the Jews that were in those parts: for they all knew that
4 his father was a Greek. And as they went on their way
through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to
keep, which had been ordained of the apostles and elders that
5 were at Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in
the faith, and increased in number daily.
- 6 And they went through the region of Phrygia and
Galatia, having been forbidden of the Holy Ghost to
7 speak the word in Asia; and when they were come over
against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; and
8 the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not; and passing by
9 Mysia, they came down to Troas. And a vision appeared
to Paul in the night; There was a man of Macedonia
standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into
10 Macedonia, and help us. And when he had seen the vision,
straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, con-
cluding that God had called us for to preach the gospel
unto them.
- 11 Setting sail therefore from Troas, we made a straight
12 course to Samothrace, and the day following to Neapolis; and
from thence to Philippi, which is a city of Macedonia, the
first of the district, a *Roman* colony: and we were in this
13 city tarrying certain days. And on the sabbath day we went
forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed
there was a place of prayer; and we sat down, and spake

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- 14 unto the women which were come together. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, to give heed unto the things which
15 were spoken by Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained us.
- 16 And it came to pass, as we were going to the place of prayer, that a certain maid having ¹ a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by sooth-
17 saying. The same following after Paul and us cried out, saying, These men are ² servants of the Most High God,
18 which proclaim unto you ³ the way of salvation. And this she did for many days. But Paul, being sore troubled, turned and said to the spirit, I charge thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And it came out that very hour.
- 19 But when her masters saw that the hope of their gain was ⁴ gone, they laid hold on Paul and Silas, and dragged them
20 into the marketplace before the rulers, and when they had brought them unto the ⁵ magistrates, they said, These men,
21 being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and set forth customs which it is not lawful for us to receive, or to observe,
22 being Romans. And the multitude rose up together against them: and the ⁵ magistrates rent their garments off them,
23 and commanded to beat them with rods. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison,
24 charging the jailor to keep them safely: who, having received such a charge, cast them into the inner prison, and
25 made their feet fast in the stocks. But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God, and
26 the prisoners were listening to them; and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison-house were shaken: and immediately all the doors were
27 opened; and every one's bands were loosed. And the jailor

¹ Gr. *a spirit, a Python.*

² Gr. *bond-servants.*

³ Or, *a way*

⁴ Gr. *come out.*

⁵ Gr. *prætors.*

being roused out of sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, drew his sword, and was about to kill himself, supposing
 28 that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.
 29 And he called for lights, and sprang in, and, trembling for
 30 fear, fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out,
 31 and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou
 32 and thy house. And they spake the word of ¹ the Lord
 33 unto him, with all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and
 34 was baptized, he and all his, immediately. And he brought them up into his house, and set ² meat before them, and rejoiced greatly, with all his house, ³ having believed in God.
 35 But when it was day, the ⁴ magistrates sent the ⁵ serjeants,
 36 saying, Let those men go. And the jailor reported the words to Paul, *saying*, The ⁴ magistrates have sent to let you go:
 37 now therefore come forth, and go in peace. But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans, and have cast us into prison; and do they now cast us out privily? nay verily; but let them
 38 come themselves and bring us out. And the ⁵ serjeants reported these words unto the ⁴ magistrates: and they
 39 feared, when they heard that they were Romans; and they came and besought them; and when they had brought
 40 them out, they asked them to go away from the city. And they went out of the prison, and entered into *the house of* Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they ⁶ comforted them, and departed.

1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis, and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: and Paul, as his custom was, went in unto them, and for three ⁷ sabbath days reasoned with them
 3 from the scriptures, opening and alleging, that it behoved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead; and

¹ Some ancient authorities read *God*.

³ Or, *having believed God*.

⁵ Gr. *lictors*.

⁶ Or, *exhorted*.

² Gr. *a table*

⁴ Gr. *prætors*.

⁷ Or, *weeks*.

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- that this Jesus, whom, *said he*, I proclaim unto you, is the
4 Christ. And some of them were persuaded, and consorted
with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great
5 multitude, and of the chief women not a few. But the Jews,
being moved with jealousy, took unto them certain vile
fellows of the rabble, and gathering a crowd, set the city
on an uproar; and assaulting the house of Jason, they sought
6 to bring them forth to the people. And when they found
them not, they dragged Jason and certain brethren before
the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned ¹ the
7 world upside down are come hither also; whom Jason
hath received: and these all act contrary to the decrees of
8 Cæsar, saying that there is another king, *one* Jesus. And
they troubled the multitude and the rulers of the city,
9 when they heard these things. And when they had taken
security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.
10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas
by night unto Berea: who when they were come thither
11 went into the synagogue of the Jews. Now these were
more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received
the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures
12 daily, whether these things were so. Many of them there-
fore believed; also of the Greek women of honourable
13 estate, and of men, not a few. But when the Jews of
Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was
proclaimed of Paul at Berea also, they came thither likewise,
14 stirring up and troubling the multitudes. And then im-
mediately the brethren sent forth Paul to go as far as to
15 the sea: and Silas and Timothy abode there still. But they
that conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens: and
receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timothy that
they should come to him with all speed, they departed.
16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit
was provoked within him, as he beheld the city full of idols.
17 So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the
devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with
18 them that met with him. And certain also of the Epicurean

¹ Gr. *the inhabited earth*.

Acts xvi.; xvii.; xviii. 1-22

and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, What would this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange ¹ gods: because he preached
 19 Jesus and the resurrection. And they took hold of him, and brought him ² unto ³ the Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new teaching is, which is spoken by thee?
 20 For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we
 21 would know therefore what these things mean. (Now all the Athenians and the strangers sojourning there ⁴ spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear
 22 some new thing.) And Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus, and said,

Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are
 23 somewhat ⁵ superstitious. For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, ⁶ TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this set I forth unto you.
 24 The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in ⁷ temples
 25 made with hands; neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all
 26 life, and breath, and all things; and he made of one every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed seasons, and the bounds
 27 of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he is not
 28 far from each one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets
 29 have said, For we are also his offspring. Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that ⁸ the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and
 30 device of man. The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he ⁹ commandeth men that they

¹ Gr. *demons*.

² Or, *before*.

³ Or, *the hill of Mars*.

⁴ Or, *had leisure for nothing else*.

⁵ Or, *religious*.

⁶ Or, *TO THE UNKNOWN GOD*.

⁷ Or, *sanctuaries*.

⁸ Or, *that which is divine*.

⁹ Some ancient authorities read *declareth to men*.

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31 should all everywhere repent: inasmuch as he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge ¹ the world in righteousness ² by ³ the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

32 Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; but others said, We will hear thee concerning this yet again. Thus Paul went out from among
33 them. But certain men clave unto him, and believed:
34 among whom also was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

1 After these things he departed from Athens, and came to
2 Corinth. And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a man of Pontus by race, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the
3 Jews to depart from Rome: and he came unto them; and because he was of the same trade, he abode with them, and they wrought; for by their trade they were tentmakers.
4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and ⁴ persuaded Jews and Greeks.

5 But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was constrained by the word, testifying to the Jews
6 that Jesus was the Christ. And when they opposed themselves, and ⁵ blasphemed, he shook out his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.
7 And he departed thence, and went into the house of a certain man named Titus Justus, one that worshipped God,
8 whose house joined hard to the synagogue. And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, ⁶ believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed,
9 and were baptized. And the Lord said unto Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not
10 thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee: for I have much people in this city.

¹ Gr. *the inhabited earth*.

³ Or, *a man*.

⁵ Or, *railed*.

² Gr. *in*.

⁴ Gr. *sought to persuade*.

⁶ Gr. *believed the Lord*.

Acts xvi.; xvii.; xviii. 1-22

- 11 And he dwelt *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.
- 12 But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul, and brought him before
- 13 the judgement-seat, saying, This man persuadeth men to
- 14 worship God contrary to the law. But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If indeed it were a matter of wrong or of wicked villany, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you:
- 15 but if they are questions about words and names and your own law, look to it yourselves; I am not minded to be a
- 16 judge of these matters. And he drave them from the
- 17 judgement-seat. And they all laid hold on Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgement-seat. And Gallio cared for none of these things.
- 18 And Paul, having tarried after this yet many days, took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in
- 19 Cenchreæ: for he had a vow. And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there: but he himself entered into the
- 20 synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. And when they
- 21 asked him to abide a longer time, he consented not; but taking his leave of them, and saying, I will return again
- 22 unto you, if God will, he set sail from Ephesus. And when he had landed at Cæsarea, he went up and saluted the church, and went down to Antioch.

Paul had made at least one attached disciple in Galatia, and he now appears on the scene. The reference to his circumcision in ver. 3 provides us with a puzzle; we should have expected Luke to write: "he circumcised him . . . because everyone knew that his mother was a Jewess," instead of "that his father was a Greek"; that his father was a Greek seems no reason for circumcising him. The "Western" text does not help us here; one MS.

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says that his mother was a "Jewish widow." From the point of view of strict Jews, children of marriages between Jews and Gentiles were illegitimate, if the father was a Gentile; if the father was a Jew, they were accepted as Jews. This must be the reason for Paul's action; one who, from their point of view, was illegitimate, would not be acceptable as a preacher to Jews, and Paul was anxious, so far as he could, to conciliate Jewish opinion (cf. 1 Cor. ix. 20); circumcision would make Timothy a genuine Jew. But it is possible that, by doing this, he incurred the charge of preaching circumcision (Gal. v. 11); Paul had to pay dearly for his concessions to Jewish prejudice. From Gal. ii. 3 it would appear that Titus also was circumcised, but not at Paul's request. Timothy seems to have been a diffident young man; Paul is afraid that he would be browbeaten at Corinth, and 1 Tim. iv. 11 makes the same suggestion. He had been well taught by his mother Eunice, and came on her side from a pious Jewish family (2 Tim. i. 5). For an answer to the question raised by the phrase, "The Phrygian and Galatian region" (ver. 6), see additional note at the end of this section.

What is meant by "opposite Mysia"? (ver. 7). Probably, if they could not enter Asia, they would follow the boundary of that province until they touched the boundary of Mysia, which was part of Asia, and so had to be avoided. Here there was another alternative; and that was to turn north-eastward into Bithynia—Paul would have done this, unless he had been prevented by "the spirit of Jesus." By "prevented by the Holy Spirit" I think we must

take it that someone in the Church (? at Pisidian Antioch), speaking under the inspiration of the Spirit, said: "Paul, you are not to go"; by "the spirit of Jesus," an intervention by a vision of Jesus when Paul was alone. In ver. 8 the "Western" text has "we came to Troas," suggesting that Luke joined the party before they got to Troas. Sir William Ramsay's idea that Luke was himself "the man from Macedonia" (see Introduction, § 9) seems fanciful, but it may well be that Luke had been asking Paul to come over the water the night before, and Paul saw him in his dreams; for "a man from Macedonia" need not mean a Macedonian. "We sought to leave for Macedonia" means "we inquired about a boat." From Troas to Samothrace would be a good day's sail with a favouring wind; Paul took five days to cross from Philippi to Troas in xx. 6. Neapolis is the modern Cavalla, and was the terminus of the famous Via Egnatia, traces of which are still plainly visible. Philippi was then a prosperous city; only a cemetery marks its site now. It was originally called Krenides, but was renamed after Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great. Brutus and Cassius were defeated there by Antony and Octavian in 42 B.C., and the town was given the title of "Colonia Julia; the fact that it was a Roman "colony" is alluded to by Paul in Phil. i. 27; iii. 20. But it was never the capital of Macedonia or of any part of it, so that the phrase, "a city of Macedonia, the first of the district," creates a difficulty. Ramsay thinks that Philippi claimed the title of "first," for which there was much competition in the Græco-Roman cities of

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that period. Perhaps "first" simply means "leading" here (cf. Acts xxviii. 17—"the local leaders of the Jews"). In one Old Latin version we have "a city of the first district of Macedonia"; Blass explained this as referring to the fact that Macedonia was divided into four districts in 167 B.C.; there is inscriptional evidence that Philippi was in the *first* of these districts. Possibly we should accept this reading, in spite of the fact that only one version shews it. "We thought there was a place of prayer" (ver. 13) suggests that Luke was not a native of Philippi; he would in that case surely have known that the Jews met to worship by the river Gangites. The Jewish ceremonial washings made it convenient to meet for worship near a river—we possess a papyrus which refers to the water-rate due from a place of prayer—but there is no evidence that it was customary to build synagogues by the riverside. A "place of prayer" is not necessarily a synagogue, though every synagogue was a place of prayer; in this case worship may have been in the open air. Lydia, Paul's first convert in Europe, came from Thyatira, a Lydian city; hence perhaps her name. Thyatira appears to have been the centre of the dyeing trade in Asia Minor, as it was the headquarters of the dyers' trade union. These guilds met for their festivities and business meetings at idol-temples; hence the warning against partaking of "things offered to idols" in the letter to the Church at Thyatira (Rev. ii. 20). There is no reason to accept Clement of Alexandria's curious suggestion that Lydia was Paul's "true yoke-fellow" (Phil. iv. 3)—in other words, his wife. "A spirit of divination"

Acts xvi.; xvii.; xviii. 1-22

(ver. 16)—she told fortunes for her master and mistress (that is what the phrase “masters” means, as in Luke xix. 33).

When Luke uses the term “Most High” in a Jewish setting he leaves out “God” quite rightly, for the phrase was used by Jews in place of the sacred name from motives of reverence (Luke i. 32, 35, 76, vi. 35; Acts vii. 48). There is good reason for believing that the title “God most high” was used in pagan religion. “Prætors” (ver. 20, R.V. margin) is a common title for city magistrates in that period; at Philippi they were called *prætores duoviri*. The R.V. is right in ver. 22 in making it clear that it was not their own clothes that the magistrates tore, but those of Paul and Silas; of course, they did not do the deed with their own hands, but ordered them to be stripped for scourging. Jews were allowed to practise their own religion, but, strictly speaking, were not allowed to make proselytes of Roman citizens. “The stocks” were a Roman instrument of torture; there were more than two holes for the legs, so that it was possible to force them wide apart, and cause great pain. Earthquakes are specially frequent in the district of Philippi; Ramsay thinks that “everyone’s bonds were loosed” means that the staples of the prisoners’ fetters were detached from the walls; if so, they would still be dragging their chains after them. Probably the jailer thought of killing himself by way of vindicating his military honour. In ver. 30 the “Western” text adds “having fastened up the others.” The implication in the jailer’s question in ver. 30—“What must I do to be saved?”—is that

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the clairvoyante slave-girl had been right in her declaration that these men "taught a way of salvation" (ver. 17); he might well have heard her cries, which had been repeated on several days. We must remember that all the mystery-cults that were so fashionable at that time claimed to be "a way of salvation"; all the gods were "saviour-gods," and the phrase would be quite familiar. In vers. 35 ff. there are two interesting additions in the "Western" text; they are (1) in vers. 35: "And when it was day the prætors assembled together in the court-house, and when they remembered the earthquake which had taken place, were afraid, and sent the lictors to say: 'Let those men whom you received yesterday go'"; and (2) in vers. 38 ff.: "The lictors reported to the prætors the words that had been said, and when they heard that they were Roman citizens they were afraid, and came with many friends to the prison, and asked them to leave, saying, 'We did not know that you were law-abiding men, but leave this city, lest those who made an uproar against you make more trouble'." The "lictors" carried bundles of rods bound together round an axe. Ver. 37 might be taken as meaning that Silas also was a Roman citizen; this is possible, though not perhaps likely. One cannot help feeling that this is the best story Luke has given us so far; the increase in liveliness when he has first-hand acquaintance with the facts is unmistakable. The Church at Philippi became very soon Paul's favourite among all his churches; they were generous people, and shewed it very soon by twice sending a contribution to the missionaries' support,

when they went on to the next place, Thessalonica (Phil. iv. 16).

From Thessalonica to Athens.

It is clear that Luke was left behind to carry on the work at Philippi, for this "we-passage" ends at this point as abruptly as it began. Probably the travellers broke their journey at Amphipolis and Apollonia to preach; the distance from Philippi to Amphipolis is about thirty miles, from Amphipolis to Apollonia twenty-seven or twenty-eight, from Apalonia to Thessalonica thirty-five. Paul must have stayed in Thessalonica more than three weeks (xvii. 2), for it is not likely that help would have been sent from Philippi twice over (Phil. iv. 16) in so short a time. - Perhaps ver. 2 means that after "three sabbaths" (or "three weeks," for the Greek words might mean either) Paul left the synagogue. We know the names of some of Paul's Thessalonian converts; beside Jason, his host, we have Aristarchus and Secundus (Acts xx. 4), both of whom went with him to Jerusalem on his last mission of relief to the Christians there. Again women of some social standing are prominent among the converts; no one can compute the importance of the part that intelligent women have played in the life of the Church from the beginning. Again also Paul's success among them roused the envy of Jewish propagandists, who evidently thought that these good people were half-converted to Judaism already, and regarded the Christian preachers as trespassing on their preserves. They

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soon succeeded in persuading—or bribing—professional “agitators”—that is probably the meaning of the word translated “vile fellows of the rabble”—to raise a mob intent on mischief. Unhappily Paul and Silas were not at home when the crowd came to Jason’s door. Jason was dragged before the “Politarchs”—who were local, not imperial magistrates—and was induced to give security that the missionaries should not preach in Thessalonica again, at least for some time. Obviously, Paul would not have consented to this, but Jason’s word of honour had been given, and Paul and Silas were compelled to leave for Berea, where for a time they preached with success till the Jews came from Thessalonica and broke up the mission again. Paul left Silas and Timothy behind, and went on to Athens. He was a marked man in Thessaly, which was part of the province of Macedonia, so he passed that district by. There is a slight incoherence here between Paul’s own account of these proceedings in 1 Thess. iii. 1 ff. and the text of Acts. Lake reconstructs the series of events as follows: (1) Paul leaves Silas and Timothy in Berea, and goes to Athens, sending a message back to them to join him at once (Acts xvii. 14 f.). (2) Silas and Timothy join him in Athens (1 Thess. iii. 1). (3) Paul sends Timothy to Thessalonica, and Silas elsewhere (1 Thess. 3. 1 f.). (4) Paul goes on to Corinth (Acts xviii. 1). (5) (Silas and) Timothy return from Macedonia to Corinth (Acts xviii. 5; 1 Thess. iii. 6). (6) Paul writes to the Thessalonians from Corinth.

The whole sequence of events suggests that this

was a time of baffled hopes and many hindrances to Paul. In 1 Thessalonians he is more than usually anxious to vindicate his own character. Many of his converts were, as we have seen, ladies of good social position, but with pagan husbands, and one can imagine how they would be teased by suggestions that the missionaries had run away, and were afraid to come back and face the music. Critics would also, we may be sure, make capital of the fact, well known by this time, that the missionaries had received a contribution to their support from Philippi, the place from which they had come to Thessalonica. Their game, it would be suggested, is to get hold of some silly women, and, when the place gets too hot to hold them, run away, and write back for a subscription; it's your money they want! The trouble was that, through no fault of their own, a complication of circumstances lent some colour to these accusations against Paul and Silas, and the worst of it was that they could not come back to refute them until the promise made by Jason was no longer valid.

Paul is by himself, in Athens, waiting impatiently for news from Thessalonica, when he catches sight of the altar to the "unknown god." There is some evidence for the existence at Athens of altars "to *unknown gods*." Diogenes Lærtius tells us that in time of pestilence the Athenians sent for Epimenides the Cretan to help them to fulfil the command of an oracle to offer atonement for the city. The altars "to unknown gods," he says, were set up in memory of his offering of black and white sheep to the local deities of the Areopagus, whoever they might be.

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Philostratus in his life of Apollonius of Tyana — a Greek rival of the Gospels—implies that such altars were common at Athens, though uncommon elsewhere. Jerome says flatly that Paul turned “gods” into “god.” As we shall discover a reference to Epimenides in Paul’s sermon, we may infer that Jerome was right. This speech is much freer from obscurities than most of the discourses reported in “Acts”; it would seem that Luke has taken special care with his style here, or perhaps that Paul felt it was a full-dress occasion, and did so. It covers much the same ground as 1 Thess. i. 9, 10, and is clearly a specimen sermon preached by Christian missionaries to a Gentile audience. Jesus is the “*man*” whom God has ordained to be the judge of the world, and that He is to be the judge is attested by His Resurrection from the dead. This last sentence roused the mockery of some of Paul’s audience, while others were curious, and wanted to hear more. The Athenians would have been willing to listen to a discussion of the philosophic argument for immortality, but the word “resurrection” suggested to them the resuscitation of corpses, and was crude and offensive. In fact, there is some reason to believe that when they first heard that Paul was talking in the market-place about “Jesus and the Resurrection,” they took “Anastasis” as the name of a new goddess. Their own Eleusinian mysteries proclaimed immortality, that is, the possibility of passing safely through the death of the body into immortal life; but “resurrection”—involving, as it did, the reanimation of the body—was a Jewish doctrine quite uncongenial to

Greek minds. One or two smaller points in the passage may be noted. It is interesting to find the Athenians calling the talkative little Jew of Tarsus a "cock sparrow"—this is Lake and Cadbury's very happy translation of the phrase "spermologos" ("seed-picker," ver. 17). The word passed from the meaning of a "bird that picks up odds and ends" to a man who picks up odds and ends in the marketplace. The word translated "setter forth" really means "herald," and was a technical term of the mystery-cults. In regard to Luke's sarcastic aside in ver. 21, Blass quotes Demosthenes, the famous Athenian orator, who charges his fellow-citizens with "going round, and asking, 'Is anything new being said?'" or, as we should say, "What's the latest?" It seems that the Areopagus is regarded by Luke as a court of justice, not a mere debating-club, but information about its exact standing at this period is very scanty, and it is unsafe to dogmatise. Lucian, curiously enough, tells us that complimentary prefaces to speeches before the Areopagus were forbidden, so perhaps the word translated "superstitious" in our versions is not altogether or only complimentary; Lake and Cadbury say that it denoted religiosity rather than religion. However, Paul does try to adapt himself to his audience by select and rather recondite quotations from Greek poets; we must remember that he was something of a classical scholar. "For we also are His offspring" comes from Aratus. It is tempting to read "some of *our* poets" for "some of your poets" in ver. 28, for Aratus came from Cilicia, perhaps even from Tarsus. But there is

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another even more interesting quotation in Paul's speech. Epimenides (see p. 157) was a half-mythical figure who was supposed to be a son of Zeus, the father of the gods. The Cretans said that Zeus had been slain by a wild boar, and shewed his grave, and a poem on the subject was attributed to Epimenides. It runs as follows: "They carved a tomb for thee, O holiest, most High, the Cretans, always liars, evil beasts, lazy bellies! But thou dost not die, but livest for ever, for in thee we live and move and have our being." It will be seen that another line of this poem is quoted in Titus i. 12. The likeness to Stephen's speech at one point should be noticed (cf. ver. 24 with Acts vii. 48). Paul's carefully prepared speech was not entirely barren of results, but the fact that he calls "the household of Stephanas" "the first-fruits of Achaia" (1 Cor. xvi. 15)—Athens was in the province of Achaia—suggests that he left no Church behind him in Athens; it is to be feared that his converts there fell away.

From Corinth to Ephesus

Perhaps too much has been made of the fact that Paul says he came to Corinth "in fear and much trembling," and that he decided to know nothing there but "Christ and Him crucified" has been taken to imply that he repented of his attempt at Athens to adapt his style of preaching to cultured hearers. Whether this is true or not, it is clear that Paul did concentrate on the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus from this time forward. 1 Thess. i. 9, 10,

has already been quoted as proving that he had not done so at Thessalonica, though he had preached the Cross in Galatia (Gal. iii. 1). We cannot help feeling that, since he left Philippi, Paul had been going through a period of frustration, but at Corinth he had his most spectacular success, a success which, it is true, brought him little satisfaction for a long time; Corinth, though perhaps the largest, and certainly the wealthiest, of his Churches, caused him more uneasy hours than any of the rest, and at one point nearly drove him to distraction. But it was amazing that a Church should be established in Corinth at all. It was a cosmopolitan seaport, re-founded by Julius Cæsar on a very narrow isthmus between the eastern and western halves of the Mediterranean. Consequently it held a unique position, for it was possible to save a long and dangerous voyage round the south coast of Greece by sailing up its eastern bay, and transporting oneself or one's goods over a few miles, and then out by the western bay in the direction of Italy. In the days of sailing-vessels such a short cut through sheltered bays would be invaluable. Consequently Corinth was an exceedingly prosperous seaport. Its night-life was so notorious that it was proverbial that it was "unsafe to go to Corinth." Paul's "fear and trembling" were perhaps as much due to doubts as to the success of his preaching in such a place as to his experiences at Thessalonica and Athens. But he made two friends, who afterwards were responsible for saving his life (Rom. xvi. 4), immediately on his arrival, and he stayed with them. They were Aquila and Prisca

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("Priscilla" was her pet name), who like him were Jews, and like him were tent- or sail-makers by trade. Everywhere else in the original text of the N.T. (except in this passage and 1 Cor. xvi. 19) the lady comes in front of her husband; this would be strange in a modern book; in an ancient book it is unique. The decree of Claudius has already been quoted in the Introduction (§ 6); probably Priscilla and Aquila were Christians before they left Rome. At any rate, they were *not* Paul's converts; Luke could not possibly have ignored the conversion of such important people; Paul's first converts in Achaia were "the household of Stephanas" (see above). If the date for Claudius' expulsion of Jews from Rome is, as some scholars think, A.D. 47, it is significant that these people are important enough to be banished by the emperor less than twenty years after the Passion, almost certainly before Peter arrived in Rome. Harnack's guess that they were two of the "visiting Romans" (Acts ii. 10) at Pentecost, who went back and started meetings at Rome, so becoming the real founders of that Church, has something to be said for it. In xviii. 5 Silas is mentioned for the last time in the Acts; he fades out of the picture, as do all the rest of Luke's characters except Paul. The meaning of ver. 5 appears to be that, till Silas and Timothy joined him, Paul had to work during the week, and could only preach on the Sabbath; afterwards he could give his whole time to preaching; perhaps Silas and Timothy could earn enough for three, though we do not know their trade. In ver. 4 the "Western" text has "putting in the name of

the Lord Jesus." Perhaps this gives us the clue to Paul's procedure; he would "put in" the name of Jesus, interrupting the preacher or reader with his unwanted responses. Sooner or later, a party was formed who wanted to hear more, and ultimately a rival conventicle was opened at the house of Titius Justus next door to the synagogue. Prisca and Aquila meanwhile carried on in the synagogue itself, and the mission had a dramatic success when Crispus, one of the synagogue officials, became a Christian. As a result of this split, Paul is dragged before Gallio, who was proconsul of Achaia in A.D. 51. Gallio, who was the brother of the famous Seneca, the philosopher-tutor of Nero—Seneca was supposed later to have been a friend of Paul—treats the whole business with lofty scorn, and when Sosthenes, another synagogue official, is beaten in front of his judgement-seat, he regards the fracas as unworthy of his attention. But our text does not make it clear who was responsible for the attack on Sosthenes. If he is the Sosthenes of 1 Cor. i. 1, and, like his colleague Crispus, had been converted, we should infer perhaps that the Jews beat him, exasperated beyond endurance at their desertion by two of their leaders. It is an uncommon name, and so we may perhaps identify him with Paul's Sosthenes, but we cannot be sure. The "Western" text reads "all the Greeks," suggesting that the Greeks took the opportunity of Gallio's snub to the Jews to work off old scores; this is only too true to life. Other MSS. have "all the Jews"; possibly the Jews felt they must work off their spite on somebody. We must leave it an open

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question: Who beat Sosthenes, and why did they beat him?¹

Some time afterwards Paul set off to Syria, leaving Prisca and Aquila at Ephesus, in which city apparently his new friends settled, for in 1 Cor. xvi. 19—this letter was probably written from Ephesus—he sends greetings from them to their old friends at Corinth. Before he sailed Paul “shaved his head” in Cenchreæ, “for he had a vow.” As far as the grammar of the original is concerned, “he” might be either Paul or Aquila, but, as he was almost certainly intending to go to Jerusalem, Paul is probably meant. Before making a dangerous journey, it was sometimes customary to take a temporary Nazirite vow—that is, a vow not to cut the hair again until the enterprise undertaken was complete. In Jerusalem, men who had taken such vows had their hair ceremonially cut in the Temple (see Acts xxi. 23 ff.). Paul had his hair cut before he sailed, as he intended not to get it cut again till he reached Jerusalem; this is interesting, as it proves he was aware that his visit might well be dangerous. But did he reach Jerusalem? On this point ver. 22 is exasperatingly vague. He reached Cæsarea, the Roman capital of Palestine (sixty miles or so from Jerusalem), and “went up and saluted the Church”; but that might only mean “went up from the harbour to the town, and greeted the Church at Cæsarea.” Some think that “went up” means “went up to Jerusalem,” as we say “went up to

¹ Lake-Cadbury suggest that the poor man was beaten twice—once by the Jews, because he had let them down, and once by the Greeks, “on general principles.”

town," when we mean "London." That he intended to go to Jerusalem seems obvious from the fact that he took the vow at Cenchreæ; but why did he want to go? It was not to take the collection, for that was not complete yet (1 Cor. xvi. 4; 2 Cor. viii. 9). The "Western" text of ver. 21 says explicitly that Paul intended to keep the next feast in Jerusalem. Possibly when Paul got to Cæsarea, he changed his mind. The Lake-Cadbury commentary makes the interesting suggestion that he only landed at Cæsarea instead of Antioch, because with certain winds it was easier to land there; "if, as often happens, the winds are east of north, it is difficult for boats coming from Ephesus to point as high as Antioch." But it is important to notice that what we call "the Second Missionary journey" ends at a comma in the Acts! Luke certainly gets over the ground fast, when he is describing journeys in which he was not Paul's companion.

NOTE.—In xvi. 6 we come upon a sentence upon which hundreds of learned pages have been written, and we can only summarise here the conclusions to which scholars have come. According to what is known as the North Galatian theory, Paul intended to go on from Pisidian Antioch westward to Asia and Ephesus, its capital, but was prevented "by the Holy Spirit"; so he turned north-eastward to the territory of Galatia. Galatia in the original use of the word took its name from the Gauls who invaded Greece and Asia Minor in the third century B.C. They overran the northern half of Asia Minor, but were driven back before they could occupy the central plateau on which the cities Paul had evangelised on the First Missionary tour—Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe—stood. The difficulties in the way of accepting this view are:

(1) The chief cities of North Galatia were Ancyra, Pessinus and Tavium; it is a sparsely populated region, and we do not hear of churches in any of these towns till much later. Is it likely that the evangelisation of churches important enough to have the Epistle to the Galatians written to them could have been passed over so cursorily by Luke?

(2) If Paul was compelled by illness (Gal. iv. 13) to make this journey, why should he leave the healthy plateau of South Galatia for the malarial

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valleys of North Galatia? There were no good roads that way, and such a journey would not have been merely difficult, but pointless. It is significant that all those who know the geography of Asia Minor well are "South Galatians" to a man.

(3) Certain references in the epistle to usages concerning wills and the adoption and coming of age of heirs (Gal. iii. 17; iv. 2 ff.) would be inapplicable in North Galatia, where the Roman law of probate was in force, whereas the usage in South Galatia (Greek law) exactly corresponds to the facts as stated by Paul. The pioneer of the South Galatian theory is the veteran scholar and explorer Sir William Ramsay, and he pointed out that in Paul's time, "Galatia" stood for a much larger area, including the cities which had been evangelised on the First Missionary journey. He translates ver. 6 "they toured the region which had originally been called Phrygia, but now was included in Galatia" (what might be called the "Phrygo-Galatic region"), "prevented as they were . . . from preaching the word in Asia." Lystra and Derbe, he thinks, were in Lycaonia Galatica, that is, the part of Lycaonia incorporated in the Roman province of Galatia, Antioch and Iconium in "Phrygia Galatica," i.e. the part of Phrygia now taken into the same province. There are difficulties in the whole-hearted acceptance of the South Galatian theory as thus stated; one is that it seems to require us to take the word "Phrygia" as an adjective—there is no decisive authority for this use—and another concerns the use of the word "region." On the whole, we may be tempted to think with the writer in the *Beginnings of Christianity* that Luke brings in the word "Galatian region" because he is aware that Paul wrote a letter to the "Galatians," and does not know himself exactly by what route Paul reached Troas, where he himself met him.

§ 13. *Paul's Third Missionary Journey* (Chaps. 18, vers. 23—end, 19 and 20)

Paul at Ephesus

A Tour in Greece and a Farewell to Asia

The Speech at Miletus

- 23 AND having spent some time *there*, he departed, and went through the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, stablishing all the disciples.
- 24 Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by race,¹ a learned man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty
- 25 in the scriptures. This man had been ²instructed in the

¹ Or, an eloquent man.

² Gr. *taught by word of mouth*.

Acts xviii. 23-28; xix.; xx.

way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught carefully the things concerning Jesus, knowing
26 only the baptism of John: and he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him
27 the way of God more carefully. And when he was minded to pass over into Achaia, the brethren encouraged him, and wrote to the disciples to receive him: and when he was come, he ¹ helped them much which had believed through
28 grace: for he powerfully confuted the Jews, ² and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to
2 Ephesus, and found certain disciples: and he said unto them, Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed? And they *said* unto him, Nay, we did not so much as hear
3 whether ³ the Holy Ghost was *given*. And he said, Into what then were ye baptized? And they said, Into John's
4 baptism. And Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on
5 Jesus. And when they heard this, they were baptized into
6 the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and
7 they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And they were in all about twelve men.
8 And he entered into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading
9 as to the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of
10 Tyrannus. And this continued for the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the

¹ Or, *helped much through grace them which had believed.*

² Or, *shewing publicly.*

³ Or, *there is a Holy Ghost.*

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- 11 Lord, both Jews and Greeks. And God wrought special
12 ¹ miracles by the hands of Paul: insomuch that unto the
sick were carried away from his body handkerchiefs or
aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil
13 spirits went out. But certain also of the strolling Jews,
exorcists, took upon them to name over them which had
the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, I adjure
14 you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven
sons of one Sceva, a Jew, a chief priest, which did this.
15 And the evil spirit answered and said unto them, Jesus I
16 ² know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in
whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and mastered
both of them, and prevailed against them, so that they
17 fled out of that house naked and wounded. And this
became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, that dwelt
at Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all, and the name of
18 the Lord Jesus was magnified. Many also of them that
had believed came, confessing, and declaring their deeds.
19 And not a few of them that practised ³ curious arts brought
their books together, and burned them in the sight of all:
and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty
20 thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of
the Lord and prevailed.
21 Now after these things were ended, Paul purposed in
the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and
Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been
22 there, I must also see Rome. And having sent into Mace-
donia two of them that ministered unto him, Timothy
and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.
23 And about that time there arose no small stir concerning
24 the Way. For a certain man named Demetrius, a silver-
smith, which made silver shrines of ⁴ Diana, brought no
25 little business unto the craftsmen; whom he gathered
together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said,
Sirs, ye know that by this business we have our wealth.
26 And ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost

¹ Gr. *powers*.

³ Or, *magical*.

² Or, *recognise*.

⁴ Gr. *Artemis*.

Acts xviii. 23-28; xix.; xx.

throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are
 27 made with hands: and not only is there danger that this our trade come into disrepute; but also that the temple of the great goddess ¹ Diana be made of no account, and that she should even be deposed from her magnificence, whom
 28 all Asia and ² the world worshippeth. And when they heard this, they were filled with wrath, and cried out,
 29 saying, Great *is* ¹ Diana of the Ephesians. And the city was filled with the confusion: and they rushed with one accord into the theatre, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus,
 30 men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel. And when Paul was minded to enter in unto the people, the disciples
 31 suffered him not. And certain also of the ³ chief officers of Asia, being his friends, sent unto him, and besought him
 32 not to adventure himself into the theatre. Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was in confusion; and the more part knew not wherefore they
 33 were come together. ⁴ And they brought Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made
 34 a defence unto the people. But when they perceived that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two
 35 hours cried out, Great *is* ¹ Diana of the Ephesians. And when the townclerk had quieted the multitude, he saith, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there who knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is temple-keeper of the great ¹ Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from
 36 ⁵ Jupiter? Seeing then that these things cannot be gainsaid,
 37 ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rash. For ye have brought *hither* these men, which are neither robbers of
 38 temples nor blasphemers of our goddess. If therefore Demetrius, and the craftsmen that are with him, have a matter against any man, ⁶ the courts are open, and there
 39 are proconsuls: let them accuse one another. But if ye

¹ Gr. *Artemis*.

² Gr. *the inhabited earth*.

³ Gr. *Asiarchs*.

⁴ Or, *And some of the multitude instructed Alexander*.

⁵ Or, *heaven*.

⁶ Or, *court days are kept*.

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seek anything about other matters, it shall be settled in the
40 regular assembly. For indeed we are in danger to be
 ¹accused concerning this day's riot, there being no cause
 for it: and as touching it we shall not be able to give
41 account of this concourse. And when he had thus spoken,
he dismissed the assembly.

1 And after the uproar was ceased, Paul having sent for
the disciples and exhorted them, took leave of them, and
2 departed for to go into Macedonia. And when he had gone
through those parts, and had given them much exhortation,
3 he came into Greece. And when he had spent three months
there, and a plot was laid against him by the Jews, as he
was about to set sail for Syria, he determined to return
4 through Macedonia. And there accompanied him ²as far
as Asia Sopater of Berea, *the son* of Pyrrhus; and of the
Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of
Derbe, and Timothy; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.
5 But these ³had gone before, and were waiting for us at
6 Troas. And we sailed away from Philippi after the days
of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five
days; where we tarried seven days.
7 And upon the first day of the week, when we were
gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with
them, intending to depart on the morrow; and prolonged
8 his speech until midnight. And there were many lights in
the upper chamber, where we were gathered together.
9 And there sat in the window a certain young man named
Eutychus, borne down with deep sleep; and as Paul dis-
coursed yet longer, being borne down by his sleep he fell
10 down from the third story, and was taken up dead. And
Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said,
11 Make ye no ado; for his life is in him. And when he was
gone up, and had broken the bread, and eaten, and had
talked with them a long while, even till break of day, so he

¹ Or, *accused of riot concerning this day.*

² Many ancient authorities omit *as far as Asia.*

³ Many ancient authorities read *came, and were waiting.*

Acts xviii. 23-28; xix.; xx.

12 departed. And they brought the lad alive, and were not a little comforted.

13 But we, going before to the ship, set sail for Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed,
14 intending himself to go ¹ by land. And when he met us at
15 Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene. And sailing from thence, we came the following day over against Chios; and the next day we touched at Samos; and ² the
16 day after we came to Miletus. For Paul had determined to sail past Ephesus, that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him
18 the ³ elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them,

Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time,
19 serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, and with trials which befell me by the plots of the Jews:
20 how that I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from
21 house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus
22 ⁴ Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me
23 there: save that the Holy Ghost testifieth unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.
24 But I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself,
⁵ so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel
25 of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom,
26 shall see my face no more. Wherefore I testify unto you
27 this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I

¹ Or, *on foot*.

² Many ancient authorities insert *having tarried at Trogyllium*.

³ Or, *presbyters*.

⁴ Many ancient authorities omit *Christ*.

⁵ Or, *in comparison of accomplishing my course*.

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shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of
28 God. Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in
the which the Holy Ghost hath made you ¹ bishops, to
feed the church of ² God, which he ³ purchased with his
29 own blood. I know that after my departing grievous
wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock;
30 and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking
perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.
31 Wherefore watch ye, remembering that by the space of
three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and
32 day with tears. And now I commend you to ⁴ God, and
to the word of his grace, which is able to build *you* up,
and to give *you* the inheritance among all them that are
33 sanctified. I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.
34 Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my
35 necessities, and to them that were with me. In all things
I gave you an example, how that so labouring ye ought to
help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord
Jesus, how he himself said, It is more blessed to give than
to receive.
36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and
37 prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell
38 on Paul's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for
the word which he had spoken, that they should behold
his face no more. And they brought him on his way
unto the ship.

In ver. 23 we have the phrase "the Galatian country and Phrygia"—the reverse order from that in xvi. 6. The kingdom of Lycaonia was divided between the province of Galatia and the kingdom of Antiochus, the kingdom of Phrygia between the provinces of Galatia and Asia; so Paul travelling over the Taurus from Antioch in Syria would travel

¹ Or, *overseers*.

³ Gr. *acquired*.

² Many ancient authorities read *the Lord*.

⁴ Some ancient authorities read *the Lord*.

through Lycaonia Antiochiana, Lycaonia Galatica, Phrygia Galatica, and Phrygia Asiana successively (Ramsay, cf. Lake's *Earlier Epistles of St Paul*, pp. 260 ff.).

Apollos appears on the Scene

Probably his full name was Apollonius (the "Western" text has it in this form here); Apollos, like Priscilla and Silas, was a pet name, by which he afterwards became known in the Church. He was almost certainly a "John-the-Baptist missionary" at first. Luke says (ver. 25) that "he knew accurately the facts about Jesus, though he only understood the baptism of John." He probably means that he knew of the existence of a Christian Church, but believed that John was greater than Jesus, inasmuch as the greater baptizes the less. The existence of a vigorous John-the-Baptist sect in Syria and Asia, who believed that he was the Messiah, when the Gospels were written, was the reason why all the evangelists, and specially the Fourth, who wrote at Ephesus, emphasise the self-subordination of John to Jesus so strongly. It was thought at one time that the Mandeian books, which are being studied so eagerly now, emanated from this sect, but the best scholars discount that opinion. The "Western" text, however, has "who had been instructed in his own country (Alexandria) in the word of the Lord"; this suggests that there was a Church in Alexandria already (A.D. 50), and that Apollos had been in touch with it. Priscilla was responsible apparently for his conversion to

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Pentecostal Christianity, for she is named first; all that we hear of this remarkable woman increases our respect for her. In vers. 27 f. the "Western" text reads: "And some Corinthians staying in Ephesus who heard him (Apollós) asked him to cross with them to their own country. And when he consented the Ephesians wrote to the disciples in Corinth to receive 'the man,'" this is perhaps the earliest case on record of an invitation to a Church! In 2 Cor. iii. 1 Paul has a side-reference to this testimonial: "do we need, like some people we know, testimonials to you or from you?"

Paul at Ephesus

G. S. Duncan, in his *St Paul's Ephesian Ministry*, has argued that "the half has not been told" in Acts of Paul's experiences at Ephesus and in the province of Asia during the three years he was resident there. He thinks that during that time he was imprisoned three times—twice in Ephesus, and once at Laodicea—and that the so-called "Epistles of the Imprisonment" ("Ephesians," Colossians, Philip-pians, and Philemon, with the authentic parts of the Pastoral Epistles) were written from that city or its neighbourhood. Certainly the letters to Corinth were written at Ephesus, and it would appear that, if Professor Duncan is right, this was the most prolific period of his ministry. This is not the place to discuss this theory of the epistles; but it is obvious, from hints Paul himself gives us, that this was the most momentous time of his life. "If," he says in

1 Cor. xv. 32, "to speak after the manner of men, I had fought with wild beasts at Ephesus"; this might mean "fought with men who were as savage as beasts," or "as, humanly speaking, it might well have been my lot, I had actually been thrown to the beasts in the arena." He tells us that Priscilla and Aquila had "laid down their necks" for "him," and that means, surely, "risked their lives" (Rom. xvi. 4); and Rom. xvi. was probably addressed to the Church at Ephesus. In 2 Cor. i. 8, he tells us—again writing from Ephesus—that he "had almost despaired of life," and dwells in moving terms upon his sufferings in recent months. When we couple with these suggestions the fact that it was so long before he visited the city—we remember how "the Holy Spirit" would not allow him on his Second Missionary journey to set foot in Asia (Acts xvi. 6)—and that, on his last journey to Jerusalem, he does *not* visit Ephesus, but calls the elders of that Church to meet him at Miletus, we feel that there is more in this than meets the eye, and that the riot at Ephesus, of which the story is told in this chapter, can have been only one of many dangerous times which Paul experienced in that city. How then can we explain Luke's comparative reserve about the history of these three years? It is a curious fact that, though there was a "proconsul" at Ephesus, as at Corinth, Luke never refers to his existence, except in a very vague allusion in the town-clerk's speech ("there are proconsuls," ver. 38—the plural here is very odd). In A.D. 54 Junius Silanus was proconsul of Asia. Agrippina, the emperor Nero's mother, was afraid of

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him, Tacitus tells us; it was thought that he had designs on the throne, for he was related to the imperial house, and one of the first things she did when Nero succeeded Claudius, her husband, was to arrange for his assassination. A period of anarchy ensued at Ephesus. Paul arrived in 53 and left in A.D. 56, and so would be living there when Silanus was assassinated, and through the turbulent period which followed that event. Duncan argues very forcibly that, if Luke was writing his book for the defence of Paul before Nero (see Introduction), any emphasis upon the fact that he had been associated with Silanus would be unwise. Perhaps, during the interregnum, when Agrippina's infamous emissaries were in command of the city, Paul's Roman citizenship would not protect him as it did elsewhere, and he was in danger of being thrown to the beasts. I am inclined to think that we may go further. Claudius had banished Prisca and Aquila from Rome; that fact bespeaks their importance. May they not have taken refuge in Ephesus, because Silanus was their protector? We know it was the custom of freedmen and women to attach themselves to some "patron" among the Roman nobility. If Agrippina was the enemy of Silanus, and Silanus was protecting Aquila and his wife as well as Paul, that very fact would increase their danger when Silanus was murdered, and those who were responsible were in power. Perhaps it was at this juncture that his friends used their influence and saved his life, a very risky proceeding, as they were already "known to the police." If Duncan is right, Luke must have been with Paul during part of

this time (Col. iv. 14; Philem. 24.); this makes it all the more remarkable that he has so little to say about it.

At the beginning of his story he tells us that Paul met some "disciples" (xix. 2) who had only been baptized "into John's Baptism." This reminds us of Apollos (xviii. 25), and seems to point to a time when no clear differentiation was made in some quarters between disciples of John and disciples of Jesus. The "Western" text softens the harshness of the phrase "we have not heard even if there is a Holy Spirit" to "we have not heard that any are receiving Holy Spirit"; this must be right, for all Jews were accustomed to the phrase "Holy Spirit" (Ps. li. 11; Isa. lxiii. 10). The "Western" reading in ver. 1 is also important; it is, "Paul wanting, according to his own plan, to go to Jerusalem, the Spirit told him to return to Asia," and it confirms our view that Paul had, as a matter of fact, not reached Jerusalem in xviii. 22. In ver. 9 Paul again leaves the synagogue, and begins a series of meetings in the lecture hall of Tyrannus—obviously a professional lecturer, for such lecturers abounded in the Greek-Roman cities of the period much as they do in the United States to-day—where he held forth, the "Western" text tells us, from eleven to four, the hours at which Tyrannus would not be using it. It was a strenuous life, and Paul's hearers must have been as keen as he was, for, as the Lake-Cadbury commentary tells us, more people would be asleep in Ephesus at 1 p.m. than at 1 a.m. Probably Paul worked at his trade in the morning and the evening, and conducted his meetings

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during the hot hours. But it was also a time of abounding success, and, in the feverish atmosphere of Ephesus Paul soon gained such a reputation that "sweat-rags and aprons"—used by Paul in the practice of his trade—were carried to the sick, and they recovered. Such an example provoked emulation; itinerant Jews were well known as magicians and exorcists, and the sons of Sceva, a Jewish priest, thought it worth while to try the effect of the names "Jesus" and "Paul." The "Western" text must be right here; it omits "seven"—it is difficult to see how the evil spirit could leap out on seven men at once!—and has "priest" for "high-priest"—what was a Jewish *high*-priest doing at Ephesus? The use of the name of Jesus in exorcism was known to the Jews; for this we have not only the evidence of Mark ix. 38 ff.; Luke ix. 49 f., but also that of the Paris magical papyrus, "I adjure thee by Jesus the God of the Hebrews." We might translate the sentence in ver. 15: "Jesus I know and Paul I know all about," and compare the fact that in the Gospels the "demons" recognise Jesus. The result of this excitement was that there was a public burning of books containing magical spells in the market-place; these secret charms were sold at high prices, and it is computed—though we cannot be sure of the exact value in modern money of "fifty thousand pieces of silver"—that the total sacrificed was as much as £2000. Evidently the riot of the silversmiths took place some time after this, we may conjecture during the period of anarchy that followed the murder of the proconsul. Paul is still planning to go to Jeru-

salem and afterwards to Rome (cf. Rom. xv. 24, 25). According to E. L. Hicks, "temple-maker" was the official title of a board of wardens of the temple of Artemis at Ephesus—we should call him "vestry-man"; if so, Luke has misunderstood the title, and thought that Demetrius manufactured shrines. What he did make was silver statuettes of the goddess of the type familiar to archæologists. Demetrius is soon able to get up an agitation against the Christian propaganda for trade reasons; the honour due to Artemis is obviously quite secondary. For "Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians," we ought perhaps to read "Gaius and Aristarchus a Macedonian," for, according to xx. 4, Gaius came from Derbe. In ver. 31 we have the surprising statement that "some of the Asiarchs" were friendly to Paul. Evidently Paul had become a person of some consequence in official circles at Ephesus. But the "Asiarchs" were local officials of the imperial religion in which the late emperor was worshipped. So those who had what was to be called by a Christian writer a generation later "the mark of the beast" (Rev. xiii.), were actually friendly to the apostle of Jesus, and no uneasiness was felt on either side! A properly called town's meeting was called "ecclesia" at Ephesus, and Luke, with evident irony, calls this mob an 'ecclesia' in vers. 32 and 41, though the town-clerk does not regard it as such (ver. 39). The whole story is told with much humour; we are familiar with the running together of crowds, though most of them do not know why they are there (ver. 32). The Jews are to the fore as usual, but when one of

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them, Alexander, tried to intervene, their unpopularity led to his being howled down, and there is a serious danger of an anti-Jewish pogrom. At this point the town-clerk intervenes, and makes a conciliatory speech with an undertone of warning. Ephesus, the temple-guardian of Artemis, was getting a bad name with the authorities; the one thing that Rome would not tolerate was unlawful assembly. There were properly qualified "proconsuls"—the plural tells in favour of Duncan, for, after the murder of Silanus, two blackguardly emissaries of Agrippina usurped the office of proconsul and held it together—and there are "sessions," times at which regular towns-meetings were held; let Demetrius bring his case against Paul forward then, and before the proper authorities. The image of Artemis in the great temple at Ephesus was supposed to have "fallen from Heaven," and the town-clerk alludes to this in his very diplomatic speech. Everything in this story points to our historian's accuracy, and the whole scene is true to life and history. But it was evidently only a picturesque incident; it in no way corresponds to the very strong language which Paul applies to his sufferings at Ephesus. Perhaps the three years at Ephesus and his repeated imprisonments there were the turning-point in his career. Henceforward a less impatient, though not less devoted, Paul appears; he no longer expects to be alive at the Coming of the Lord (the difference between the tone of 1 Cor. xv. 51 and 2 Cor. v. 6, Phil. i. 23 is unmistakable); he has been too near the gates of death for that (2 Cor. i. 8). He is far more tolerant of opposition (cf. Gal. i. 9, 2 Cor. xi. 13 with

Acts xviii. 23-28; xix.; xx.

the tone of Phil. i. 18), and is not a greater missionary—he could not be that—but certainly a greater saint.

A Tour in Greece and a Farewell to Asia

In xx. 5 “we-passages” begin again, and the narrative which, in the first four verses, has been somewhat sketchy and obscure, becomes again clear and full of vivid detail. Paul evidently kept “pass-over” at Philippi (ver. 6); Christians had not yet learnt to separate Easter from the Jewish passover. It is not clear whether “to break bread” (ver. 7) means “to celebrate the Eucharist” or simply “to have a meal”; probably the Agape (or common meal) and the Eucharist were not definitely separated yet. In ver. 8 we ought perhaps to read—with the “Western” text—“windows” for “lamps”; Eutychus was sitting in one of them, when he fell. Ver. 12 seems to suggest that Eutychus remained unconscious till dawn—all the time Paul was talking—and had not recovered when Paul left; the “Western” text says that they brought him in just as Paul was going. Ver. 13, the writer in Lake-Cadbury suggests, leads one to think that Paul was a bad sailor; in the open water between Troas and Assos the north-east wind prevails for five days out of seven, and those who are only accustomed to steam-ships have no idea of the misery the Mediterranean can cause!

The Speech at Miletus

This is the only speech to a Christian community preserved in the Acts, and it bears all the marks of

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genuineness; one cannot doubt that the writer was present. There are one or two obscurities in it, but, as with the other speeches, they only go to shew that the speech was not merely Luke's own composition. Ver. 19 deepens our impression that Paul had many more troubles than chap. 19 has described; "plots of the Jews" are not mentioned there. "Bound in the spirit" (ver. 22) means "under the constraint of the Spirit." Ver 25 suggests strongly that Luke was not aware that Paul ever visited Asia again, and this tells against the theory that he was released after his first trial in Rome, and visited the east again. "His own blood" (ver. 28) can scarcely be the true reading, for nowhere else do we hear of the "blood of God"; "the blood of His own (Son)" is probably what Paul meant. The plural "bishops" should specially be noticed; taken along with Phil. i. 1, it shews that the time had not come yet when there was one bishop in every Church. That Ephesus was specially troubled with heretical teachers is confirmed by Rev. ii. 2, and perhaps by Rom. xvi. 17, if that chapter was sent to Ephesus. When Paul said "these hands" (ver. 34), we can think of him holding up his toil-worn hands. Evidently he kept the whole company of missionaries going by his labours; he must have been a prodigious worker and a very capable craftsman! In ver. 35 we have what is called an "unwritten" saying of Jesus, that is, a saying not found in our Gospels; possibly, however, it is simply an inference from two sayings, both in the Third Gospel: "Ask and it shall be given you" and "Give, and it shall be given you, pressed down, running over," etc. (Luke vi. 38;

xi. 9). Luke is much more emotional than the other evangelists, and he lets himself go in vers. 37, 38. The noun "the gospel" (euangelion) occurs in the Lucan writings only here and in xv. 7; it was a favourite word of Paul's.

§ 14. *Paul's Arrest in Jerusalem and his Adventures
then* (Chaps. 21-23)

Paul's First Speech in his own Defence, and what followed it

Paul's Second Defence and Removal to Cæsarea

- 1 AND when it came to pass that we were parted from them,
and had set sail, we came with a straight course unto Cos,
and the next day unto Rhodes, and from thence unto
- 2 Patara: and having found a ship crossing over unto
- 3 Phœnicia, we went aboard, and set sail. And when we
had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left hand, we
sailed unto Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship
- 4 was to unlade her burden. And having found the disciples,
we tarried there seven days: and these said to Paul through
- 5 the Spirit, that he should not set foot in Jerusalem. And
when it came to pass that we had accomplished the days,
we departed and went on our journey; and they all, with
wives and children, brought us on our way, till we were
out of the city: and kneeling down on the beach, we
- 6 prayed, and bade each other farewell; and we went on
board the ship, but they returned home again.
- 7 And when we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we
arrived at Ptolemais; and we saluted the brethren, and
- 8 abode with them one day. And on the morrow we departed,
and came unto Cæsarea: and entering into the house of
Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we abode
- 9 with him. Now this man had four daughters, virgins,

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- 10 which did prophesy. And as we tarried there ¹ many days, there came down from Judæa a certain prophet, named
11 Agabus. And coming to us, and taking Paul's girdle, he bound his own feet and hands, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands
12 of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we and they of that place besought him not to go up to
13 Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.
14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.
15 And after these days we ² took up our baggage, and
16 went up to Jerusalem. And there went with us also *certain* of the disciples from Cæsarea, bringing *with them* one Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge.
17 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren
18 received us gladly. And the day following Paul went in
19 with us unto James; and all the elders were present. And when he had saluted them, he rehearsed one by one the things which God had wrought among the Gentiles by his
20 ministry. And they, when they heard it, glorified God; and they said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many
 ³ thousands there are among the Jews of them which have
21 believed; and they are all zealous for the law: and they have been informed concerning thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children, neither to walk
22 after the customs. What is it therefore? they will certainly
23 hear that thou art come. Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them;
24 these take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges for them, that they may shave their heads: and all shall know that there is no truth in the things whereof they have been informed concerning thee; but that thou thyself also

¹ Or, *some*.

² Or, *made ready*.

³ Gr. *myriads*.

Acts xxi.-xxiii.

- 25 walkest orderly, keeping the law. But as touching the Gentiles which have believed, we ¹ wrote, giving judgement that they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what is strangled, and
26 from fornication. Then Paul ² took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them went into the temple, declaring the fulfilment of the days of purification, until the offering was offered for every one of them.
- 27 And when the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred
28 up all the multitude, and laid hands on him, crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place: and moreover he brought Greeks also into the temple, and
29 hath defiled this holy place. For they had before seen with him in the city Trophimus the Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple. And all the
30 city was moved, and the people ran together: and they laid hold on Paul, and dragged him out of the temple: and
31 straightway the doors were shut. And as they were seeking to kill him, tidings came up to the ³ chief captain of the
32 ⁴ band, that all Jerusalem was in confusion. And forthwith he took soldiers and centurions, and ran down upon them: and they, when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers,
33 left off beating Paul. Then the chief captain came near, and laid hold on him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and inquired who he was, and what he
34 had done. And some shouted one thing, some another, among the crowd: and when he could not know the certainty for the uproar, he commanded him to be brought
35 into the castle. And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of
36 the crowd; for the multitude of the people followed after, crying out, Away with him.

¹ Or, *enjoined*. Many ancient authorities read *sent*.

² Or, *took the men the next day, and purifying himself &c.*

³ Or, *military tribune*. Gr. *chiliarch*: and so throughout this book.

⁴ Or, *cohort*.

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37 And as Paul was about to be brought into the castle, he
saith unto the chief captain, May I say something unto
38 thee? And he said, Dost thou know Greek? Art thou
not then the Egyptian, which before these days stirred up
to sedition and led out into the wilderness the four thousand
39 men of the Assassins? But Paul said, I am a Jew, of Tarsus
in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and I beseech thee,
40 give me leave to speak unto the people. And when he had
given him leave, Paul, standing on the stairs, beckoned
with the hand unto the people; and when there was made
a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew language,
saying,

1 Brethren and fathers, hear ye the defence which I now
make unto you.
2 And when they heard that he spake unto them in the
Hebrew language, they were the more quiet: and he saith,
3 I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in
this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to the
strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for
4 God, even as ye all are this day: and I persecuted this
Way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons
5 both men and women. As also the high priest doth bear
me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom
also I received letters unto the brethren, and journeyed to
6 Jerusalem in bonds, for to be punished. And it came to
pass, that, as I made my journey, and drew nigh unto
Damascus, about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven
7 a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground,
and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest
8 thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And
he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou per-
9 secutest. And they that were with me beheld indeed the
light, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.
10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said
unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall
be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to
11 do. And when I could not see for the glory of that light,

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being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came
12 into Damascus. And one Ananias, a devout man according
to the law, well reported of by all the Jews that dwelt
13 there, came unto me, and standing by me said unto me,
Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And in that very hour I
14 ¹ looked up on him. And he said, The God of our fathers
hath appointed thee to know his will, and to see the Righteous
15 One, and to hear a voice from his mouth. For thou shalt
be a witness for him unto all men of what thou hast seen
16 and heard. And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be
17 baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name. And
it came to pass, that, when I had returned to Jerusalem, and
18 while I prayed in the temple, I fell into a trance, and saw
him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out
of Jerusalem: because they will not receive of thee testimony
19 concerning me. And I said, Lord, they themselves know
that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that
20 believed on thee: and when the blood of Stephen thy
witness was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting,
21 and keeping the garments of them that slew him. And he
said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee forth far hence
unto the Gentiles.

22 And they gave him audience unto this word; and they
lifted up their voice, and said, Away with such a fellow
23 from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. And as
they cried out, and threw off their garments, and cast dust
24 into the air, the chief captain commanded him to be brought
into the castle, bidding that he should be examined by
scourging, that he might know for what cause they so
25 shouted against him. And when they had tied him up
² with the thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood
by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman,
26 and uncondemned? And when the centurion heard it, he
went to the chief captain, and told him, saying, What art
27 thou about to do? for this man is a Roman. And the
chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a
28 Roman? And he said, Yea. And the chief captain answered,

¹ Or, *received my sight* and looked upon him. ² Or, *for*.

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- With a great sum obtained I this citizenship. And Paul
29 said, But I am *a Roman* born. They then which were
about to examine him straightway departed from him: and
the chief captain also was afraid, when he knew that he was
a Roman, and because he had bound him.
- 30 But on the morrow, desiring to know the certainty,
wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him, and
commanded the chief priests and all the council to come
together, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.
- 1 And Paul, looking stedfastly on the council, said,
Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience
2 until this day. And the high priest Ananias commanded
3 them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. Then
said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall:
and sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and
4 commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? And
they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?
5 And Paul said, I wist not, brethren, that he was high priest:
for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler of thy
6 people. But when Paul perceived that the one part were
Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the
council, Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees:
touching the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called
7 in question. And when he had so said, there arose a dis-
sension between the Pharisees and Sadducees: and the
8 assembly was divided. For the Sadducees say that there
is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees
9 confess both. And there arose a great clamour: and some
of the scribes of the Pharisees' part stood up, and strove,
saying, We find no evil in this man: and what if a spirit
10 hath spoken to him, or an angel? And when there arose a
great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should
be torn in pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go
down and take him by force from among them, and bring
him into the castle.
- 11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and
said, Be of good cheer: for as thou hast testified concerning
me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

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- 12 And when it was day, the Jews banded together, and
bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would
13 neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. And they
14 were more than forty which made this conspiracy. And
they came to the chief priests and the elders, and said, We
have bound ourselves under a great curse, to taste nothing
15 until we have killed Paul. Now therefore do ye with the
council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down
unto you, as though ye would judge of his case more
exactly: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to slay
16 him. But Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait,
¹ and he came and entered into the castle, and told Paul.
17 And Paul called unto him one of the centurions, and said,
Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath
18 something to tell him. So he took him, and brought him
to the chief captain, and saith, Paul the prisoner called me
unto him, and asked me to bring this young man unto thee,
19 who hath something to say to thee. And the chief captain
took him by the hand, and going aside asked him privately,
20 What is that thou hast to tell me? And he said, The Jews
have agreed to ask thee to bring down Paul to-morrow
unto the council, as though thou wouldest inquire somewhat
21 more exactly concerning him. Do not thou therefore
yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them
more than forty men, which have bound themselves under
a curse, neither to eat nor to drink till they have slain him:
and now are they ready, looking for the promise from thee.
22 So the chief captain let the young man go, charging him,
Tell no man that thou hast signified these things to me.
23 And he called unto him two of the centurions, and said,
Make ready two hundred soldiers to go as far as Cæsarea,
and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred,
24 at the third hour of the night: and *he bade them* provide
beasts, that they might set Paul thereon, and bring him safe
25 unto Felix the governor. And he wrote a letter after this
form:
26 Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix,

¹ Or, *having come in upon them, and he entered, &c.*

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- 27 greeting. This man was seized by the Jews, and was about to be slain of them, when I came upon them with the soldiers, and rescued him, having learned that he was a
28 Roman. And desiring to know the cause wherefore they accused him, ¹I brought him down unto their council:
29 whom I found to be accused about questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or
30 of bonds. And when it was shewn to me that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to thee forthwith, charging his accusers also to speak against him before thee.²
- 31 So the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul,
32 and brought him by night to Antipatris. But on the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the
33 castle: and they, when they came to Cæsarea, and delivered the letter to the governor, presented Paul also before him.
34 And when he had read it, he asked of what province he was;
35 and when he understood that he was of Cilicia, I will hear thy cause, said he, when thine accusers also are come: and he commanded him to be kept in Herod's ³ palace.

In the first verse we should, with the "Western" text, add "and Myra" after Patara; Myra was the port where they would change ships. It was a famous sailors' town, and "Santa Claus" (St Nicholas of Myra) comes from it. In all eastern seaports in England Churches "of Saint Nicholas" are to be found; he is the sailors' patron saint. They finally reached Tyre, and the comparatively long wait there is accounted for by the unloading of the cargo (xxi. 3). Nothing is known about the foundation of a Christian Church in Tyre; but see xi. 19. Here Paul is warned "by the Spirit" not to go to Jerusalem, but disregards

¹ Some ancient authorities omit *I brought him down unto their council*.

² Many ancient authorities add *Farewell*.

³ Gr. *prætorium*.

the warning, which must have been given by a presumably inspired member of the Church. It is strange that, on this journey, Paul is constantly dissuaded by the Spirit, and yet he has told us that he was making it "under the constraint of the Spirit"; that the same Spirit should urge him on and at the same time suggest difficulties ahead is by no means incredible. Apparently Paul waited for the ship to be reloaded, and went on in it to Ptolemais (modern Acco) the Roman port of Palestine, and then by road to Cæsarea. Philip the evangelist was still living there (we left him at Cæsarea in viii. 40), but now had four unmarried daughters, all prophetesses, "and so," says Luke rather quaintly, "we stayed there more days" ("than we intended"). It has been suggested that they gave Luke the information on which his story of Philip's adventures, and perhaps of Pentecost, was based (Introduction, § 11). For Agabus, compare xi. 28; it is surprising that Luke does not refer to his earlier appearance in his own pages; Agabus suddenly appears, says something, and disappears; "this is not fiction, but real life" (Lake-Cadbury). "Breaking my heart" means here (ver. 13) "bleaching my heart by pounding it like a washerwoman." "Took up our baggage" means "either hired horses" or "packed our luggage"; every detail of this momentous journey is graven on Luke's memory. The journey from Cæsarea to Jerusalem was sixty miles, and it is unlikely that the travellers would accomplish it without a break. So we ought probably to accept the "Western" reading of ver. 16: "we reached a village" (for Luke's reluctance to give the names

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of villages where friends who had told him stories of Jesus lived, cf. Luke x. 38; he knew Bethany quite well, but did not choose to tell his readers that Martha lived there) "and stayed there with Mnason, an original disciple" (of Jesus) "from Cyprus." Perhaps it was on that night that Luke made up his mind to use the time he was likely to spend in Palestine in collecting stories about Jesus from such people as Mnason, whose very name means "the man with a long memory." Certainly the road from Galilee to Jerusalem figures largely in Luke's Gospel; he could not fail to be impressed by the fact that both Jesus and Paul made a fateful journey, against the wishes of their friends, along the same road to the same destination; indeed, ver. 14 might be regarded as an echo of Gethsemane.

Luke does not definitely say that James made the proposal which resulted in Paul's arrest, but only that he was present when it was made. "Many thousands" of Jewish Christians "zealous for the law" seems a large number; perhaps it simply means "ever so many." Paul is to disarm criticism, and prove his patriotism, by undertaking to pay the expenses—eight pigeons and two lambs in all—of four men who had taken a voluntary vow, like that which Paul himself had taken at Cenchreæ (xviii. 18). It is strange that the "elders" tell Paul of the decree of the Council (xv. 20, 29—see note on the "Western" reading in the commentary on xv. 20), as if he had never heard of it! Paul cannot have been getting his hair cut himself, unless he had let his hair grow for three and a half years! Apparently "seven days" was

the period required for purification, when those who had taken such a vow had accidentally incurred defilement, but the whole subject is obscure. We know, however, that Agrippa I paid the expenses of several Nazirites. Paul was engaged upon this business—we may imagine that he frequented the Temple during the seven days, so that what he was doing might become public property, and make its full impression—when unhappily some Jews from Asia (*not* Jewish Christians) who knew Trophimus, a Gentile from Ephesus, saw him in Paul's company, and leapt to the conclusion that he had been into the inner part of the Temple with him. In a moment there was a dangerous scuffle; the "captain of the Temple" (the "sagan") probably shut the doors to prevent further trouble. The officer of the garrison—which was stationed in the "Tower of Antonia," connected with the Temple-courts by two flights of steps—came with his men just in time to save Paul from being lynched by the mob. Claudius Lysias, for that was his name, got Paul away with some difficulty—he had actually to be carried by the soldiers up the steps—thinking he had made a capture, for at first sight, as he explained afterwards, he had mistaken him for an "Egyptian," who had made trouble with a band of "daggersmen" (*sicarii*), and who was wanted by the police. Probably his description had been circulated round the garrisons of the Near East. Paul had a scar—"the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gal. vi. 17)—the reminder of his stoning at Lystra, and this may have been one of the signs by which they were to know the wanted man. The "dagger-

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men" made themselves notorious by mingling with the crowds in the Temple during the last panic-stricken days before the city's fall, and stabbing their opponents with daggers concealed under their cloaks. But Josephus is our authority for the existence of the party long before that—he mentions the "Egyptian," but says he led 30,000, not 4000 men. Strangely enough, a very small change in the sign for 4000 would make it into 30,000. I have often wondered whether we have not here the clue to the real meaning of Iscariot, the second name of Judas, which appears in the "Western" MSS. quite often as "Scarioth" or "Scariotes."¹ When Paul opened his mouth, Claudius Lysias instantly recognised that he was a gentleman, as everyone who heard him speak knew at once. Perhaps it was not so much the fact that "he knew Greek," as the way he pronounced it that convinced the blunt soldier. At once he gave him permission to stand on the steps, up which he had been so unceremoniously bundled a moment before, and address the crowd in Aramaic, which at once gained him a respectful hearing.

Paul's First Speech in his own Defence, and what followed it.

The subject-matter of this speech has already been dealt with in the Introduction (§ 9), and in the commentary on ix. 1 ff. One difficulty in regard to Paul's claim (xxii. 3) to have been trained at the feet

¹ Possibly "Scarioth" (Scariotes) was a nickname of Judas', and in that case the explanation "man of Kerioth" falls to the ground.

of Gamaliel consists in the fact that in his epistles he repeatedly argues that, according to Judaism, salvation is obtainable by "works done in obedience to law." Jewish scholars declare that no Rabbi, least of all Gamaliel, has ever propounded such a doctrine. Their teaching was that salvation came by *repentance*. The answer to this objection must be, (1) Paul nowhere attributes to his *teachers* the doctrine of salvation by works; his argument is that, whatever the Rabbis said, this is what a religion based upon obedience to law does amount to in practice; and (2) That repentance is something that man *does*, and so is one of the "works." It has been already pointed out (Introduction, § 9) that Ananias plays a prominent part in this story of conversion. The new feature of the account given here is the story of the "trance-vision" in the Temple (vers. 17-21). Is this the vision referred to in 2 Cor. xii. 2 ff.? All depends on whether Paul is speaking of his own, or someone else's, experience in that passage. We are on safer ground when we suggest that "Have not I seen the Lord?" (1 Cor. ix. 1) contains an allusion to this vision, not to his experience on the Damascus road, for none of the three accounts of Paul's conversion in Acts suggest that he actually saw Jesus *then*. The crowd heard him patiently until Paul came to the commission to the Gentiles; it was not that they objected to preaching to the heathen, but to *such* preaching! There was tremendous excitement; people in the crowd took off their outer garments and waved them in the air. The throwing of dust Cadbury thinks should be classed with Paul's gesture in xiv. 14; it was a gesture of horror at what

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was considered blasphemy. The nearest O.T. parallel is Job ii. 12, where the friends of Job, on seeing his condition, throw dust on their heads. It was considered blasphemy that Paul should claim that he had a divine commission to preach anything else than unadulterated Judaism to the Gentiles. The tribune who was watching comes to the conclusion, though he does not understand what all the excitement is about, that Paul must be guilty of some outrage on the feelings of these Jews; so he decides to have Paul scourged, in the hope that he will confess what it was; in other words, he tries the "third degree." All is ready for the scourging, when Paul quietly mentions his Roman citizenship. He was evidently much prouder of his Pharisaic origin and of Tarsus, his native town, than of his status as a Roman citizen. His object in keeping the fact that he was a Roman citizen back so long was perhaps the same as at Philippi—to teach these hasty officials a lesson. The "Western" reading in ver. 28 is very attractive: "I know how much it cost me to obtain this citizenship." The Venerable Bede—who used a text allied to the "Western"—has "It is easy to *say* you are a Roman citizen; I know how much it cost me!" In other words, "How could a shabby fellow like you afford it?" The answer was, of course, that his parents had bought it before Paul was born; that was perhaps the reason why Paul was not very proud of it. The tribune decides upon having a set trial before the Sanhedrin.

Paul's Second Defence and Removal to Cæsarea.

The Ananias who behaved so badly at the beginning of this speech was a notoriously unscrupulous politician who held the office during the reigns of Claudius and Nero; in A.D. 66 he was assassinated by the "daggersmen" referred to in xxi. 38; perhaps his fate is alluded to in Luke's report of Paul's sharp reply: "God *shall* smite thee, thou whited wall!" In spite of Lake-Cadbury, I think Paul's allusion is to the saying of Jesus underlying Matt. xxiii. 27. Beneath his official dignity Ananias concealed a ruffianly spirit, and his conduct revealed it. There was nothing in Paul's dignified statement of his own clear conscience to excuse the outrage. "Whitewashed sepulchres" in the Gospel refers to the fact that the tombs of idolatrous kings of Judah buried in the Temple-area were whitewashed afresh every spring, lest worshippers should incur defilement by treading upon them. Perhaps Paul did not improve matters by his apology. "I did not know that he was the high-priest" suggests "You would not have thought it to look at him!" Ananias must have been in plain clothes. By the obvious approval of his protest Paul sees that feeling between Pharisees and Sadducees runs very deep, and he proceeds very cleverly to divide the meeting, much as Jesus had done when He brought up the question of John's Baptism—on which the two parties had notoriously been at odds, the Pharisees approving, the Sadducees deriding it—to the deputation representing both parties which came to Him to demand an explanation of His action in cleansing the Temple

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(Mark xi. 29). If it be objected that Paul's action was not exactly turning the other cheek, we must remember that more was at stake than a purely private insult; such treatment of defenceless prisoners could not be allowed to pass without rebuke; Jesus Himself, when similarly treated, expostulated more mildly (John xviii. 23 f.). Paul's appeal to Pharisaic opinion in the meeting was almost too successful, for the assembly rapidly degenerated into something like a free fight between the parties, in which Paul was in danger of being torn to pieces. So the defence comes abruptly to an end, and Paul is hurriedly taken back to the barracks once more. Next night he has another vision of "the Lord," which must mean "Jesus." It is remarkable that Jesus is more prominent in these later chapters than He has been before; we have not heard of His intervention in person since xvi. 7. There follows a very vivid account of another Jewish plot to kill Paul. Apparently the Pharisaic section of the Sanhedrin had no part in this (xxiii. 14). The information that Paul had a married sister living in Jerusalem is interesting; it was in consequence of her son's exposure of the plot that Paul is hurried away to Cæsarea by a military guard overnight. The word translated "spearmen" is very puzzling; the Lake-Cadbury commentary suggests "led horses"; a cavalry officer who cared for his horses would surely provide second horses for his men, if he were sending them at speed from Jerusalem to Cæsarea, but even then 200 is a large number! The "Western" text has "100 cavalry and 200 infantry," and omits the strange word altogether. The "third hour of the

night" (ver. 23) would be about 9.30 p.m. To ver. 24 the "Western" text adds: "for he was afraid that the Jews would seize and kill him (Paul), and afterwards he would incur the charge of having taken money" (to overlook the lynching). Had Luke, we wonder, seen a copy of Claudius Lysias' letter? It is all very true to life, specially the writer's suppression of the fact that he had been on the point of scourging Paul, when he discovered that he was a Roman citizen! Felix was the brother of Pallas, a freedman of the Emperor Claudius; Tacitus tells us that "he exercised the power of a king with the mind of a slave." Paul is lodged in "Herod's prætorium," which had been taken over by the Romans, and had become their headquarters in Palestine.

§ 15. *Paul's Imprisonment in Cæsarea*
(Chaps. 24–26)

- 1 AND after five days the high priest Ananias came down with certain elders, and *with* an orator, one Tertullus; and they
- 2 informed the governor against Paul. And when he was called, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying,

Seeing that by thee we enjoy much peace, and that by

- 3 thy providence evils are corrected for this nation, we accept it in all ways and in all places, most excellent Felix, with
- 4 all thankfulness. But, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I intreat thee to hear us of thy clemency a few words.
- 5 For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of insurrections among all the Jews throughout ¹ the world,
- 6 and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes: who moreover assayed to profane the temple: on whom also we laid

¹ Gr. *the inhabited earth*.

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- 8 hold: ¹ from whom thou wilt be able, by examining him
thyself, to take knowledge of all these things, whereof we
9 accuse him. And the Jews also joined in the charge,
affirming that these things were so.
- 10 And when the governor had beckoned unto him to
speak, Paul answered,
Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years
a judge unto this nation, I do cheerfully make my defence:
11 seeing that thou canst take knowledge, that it is not more
than twelve days since I went up to worship at Jerusalem:
12 and neither in the temple did they find me disputing with
any man or stirring up a crowd, nor in the synagogues,
13 nor in the city. Neither can they prove to thee the things
14 whereof they now accuse me. But this I confess unto thee,
that after the Way which they call ² a sect, so serve I the
God of our fathers, believing all things which are according
15 to the law, and which are written in the prophets: having
hope toward God, which these also themselves ³ look for,
that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust.
16 Herein do I also exercise myself to have a conscience void
17 of offence toward God and men alway. Now after ⁴ many
years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings:
18 ⁵ amidst which they found me purified in the temple, with
no crowd, nor yet with tumult: but *there were* certain
19 Jews from Asia—who ought to have been here before thee,
and to make accusation, if they had aught against me.
20 Or else let these men themselves say what wrong-doing
21 they found, when I stood before the council, except it be
for this one voice, that I cried standing among them,
Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question
before you this day.
- 22 But Felix, having more exact knowledge concerning the

¹ Some ancient authorities insert *and we would have judged him according to our law.* ⁷ *But the chief captain Lysias came, and with great violence took him away out of our hands,* ⁸ *commanding his accusers to come before thee.*

² Or, *heresy.*

³ Or, *accept.*

⁴ Or, *some.*

⁵ Or, *in presenting which.*

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Way, deferred them, saying, When Lysias the chief captain
23 shall come down, I will determine your matter. And he gave order to the centurion that he should be kept in charge, and should have indulgence; and not to forbid any of his friends to minister unto him.

24 But after certain days, Felix came with Drusilla, ¹ his wife, which was a Jewess, and sent for Paul, and heard him
25 concerning the faith in Christ Jesus. And as he reasoned of righteousness, and ² temperance, and the judgement to come, Felix was terrified, and answered, Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call
26 thee unto me. He hoped withal that money would be given him of Paul: wherefore also he sent for him the
27 oftener, and communed with him. But when two years were fulfilled, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and desiring to gain favour with the Jews, Felix left Paul in bonds.

1 Festus therefore, ³ having come into the province, after
2 three days went up to Jerusalem from Cæsarea. And the chief priests and the principal men of the Jews informed
3 him against Paul; and they besought him, asking favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem;
4 laying wait to kill him on the way. Howbeit Festus answered, that Paul was kept in charge at Cæsarea, and
5 that he himself was about to depart *thither* shortly. Let them therefore, saith he, which are of power among you, go down with me, and if there is anything amiss in the man, let them accuse him.

6 And when he had tarried among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down unto Cæsarea; and on the morrow he sat on the judgement-seat, and commanded
7 Paul to be brought. And when he was come, the Jews which had come down from Jerusalem stood round about him, bringing against him many and grievous charges,
8 which they could not prove; while Paul said in his defence,

¹ Gr. *his own wife*.

² Or, *self-control*.

³ Or, *having entered upon his province*.

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Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple,
9 nor against Cæsar, have I sinned at all. But Festus, desiring
to gain favour with the Jews, answered Paul, and said,
Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these
10 things before me? But Paul said, I am standing before
Cæsar's judgement-seat, where I ought to be judged: to
the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou also very well
11 knowest. If then I am a wrong-doer, and have committed
anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if none
of those things is *true*, whereof these accuse me, no man
12 can ¹ give me up unto them. I appeal unto Cæsar. Then
Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered,
Thou hast appealed unto Cæsar: unto Cæsar shalt thou go.
13 Now when certain days were passed, Agrippa the king
14 and Bernice arrived at Cæsarea, ² and saluted Festus. And
as they tarried there many days, Festus laid Paul's case
before the king, saying, There is a certain man left a prisoner
15 by Felix: about whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief
priests and the elders of the Jews informed *me*, asking for
16 sentence against him. To whom I answered, that it is not
the custom of the Romans to give up any man, before that
the accused have the accusers face to face, and have had
opportunity to make his defence concerning the matter laid
17 against him. When therefore they were come together
here, I made no delay, but on the next day sat down on the
judgement-seat, and commanded the man to be brought.
18 Concerning whom, when the accusers stood up, they
19 brought no charge of such evil things as I supposed; but
had certain questions against him of their own ³religion,
and of one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be
20 alive. And I, being perplexed how to inquire concerning
these things, asked whether he would go to Jerusalem, and
21 there be judged of these matters. But when Paul had
appealed to be kept for the decision of ⁴ the emperor, I
commanded him to be kept till I should send him to Cæsar.
22 And Agrippa *said* unto Festus, I also ⁵ could wish to hear

¹ Gr. *grant me by favour*: and so in ver. 16.

³ Or, *superstition*.

⁴ Gr. *the Augustus*.

² Or, *having saluted*.

⁵ Or, *was wishing*.

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the man myself. To-morrow, saith he, thou shalt hear him.

- 23 So on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and³ Bernice, with great pomp, and they were entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and the principal men of the city, at the command of Festus Paul was brought in.
- 24 And Festus saith, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye behold this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews made suit to me, both at Jerusalem
- 25 and here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. But I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death: and as he himself appealed to ¹ the emperor I determined
- 26 to send him. Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, king Agrippa, that, after
- 27 examination had, I may have somewhat to write. For it seemeth to me unreasonable, in sending a prisoner, not withal to signify the charges against him.

1 And Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth his hand, and made his defence:

- 2 I think myself happy, king Agrippa, that I am to make my defence before thee this day touching all the things
- 3 whereof I am accused by the Jews: ² especially because thou art expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.
- 4 My manner of life then from my youth up, which was from the beginning among mine own nation, and at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; having knowledge of me from the first, if they be willing to testify, how that after the
- 6 straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand *here* to be judged for the hope of the promise made
- 7 of God unto our fathers; unto which *promise* our twelve tribes, earnestly serving *God* night and day, hope to attain. And concerning this hope I am accused by the Jews, O
- 8 king! Why is it judged incredible with you, if God doth

¹ Gr. *the Augustus*.

² Or, *because thou art especially expert*.

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9 raise the dead? I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.
10 And this I also did in Jerusalem: and I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death, I gave my
11 vote against them. And punishing them oftentimes in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them
12 even unto foreign cities. ¹ Whereupon as I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief
13 priests, at midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round
14 about me and them that journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice saying unto me in the Hebrew language, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou
15 me? it is hard for thee to kick against ² the goad. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus
16 whom thou persecutest. But arise, and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things³ wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto
17 thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles,
18 unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, ⁴ that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me.
19 Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto
20 the heavenly vision: but declared both to them of Damascus first, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judæa, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and
21 turn to God, doing works worthy of ⁵ repentance. For this cause the Jews seized me in the temple, and assayed to
22 kill me. Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses

¹ Or, *On which errand.*

² Gr. *goads.*

³ Many ancient authorities read *which thou hast seen.*

⁴ Or, *to turn them.*

⁵ Or, *their repentance.*

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- 23 did say should come; ¹ how that the Christ ² must suffer, *and* ¹ how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles.
- 24 And as he thus made his defence, Festus saith with a loud voice, Paul, thou art mad; thy much learning doth
- 25 turn thee to madness. But Paul saith, I am not mad, most excellent Festus; but speak forth words of truth and
- 26 soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, unto whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things is hidden from him; for this hath not been
- 27 in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?
- 28 I know that thou believest. And Agrippa *said* unto Paul, With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a
- 29 Christian. And Paul *said*, I would to God, that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds.
- 30 And the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice,
- 31 and they that sat with them: and when they had withdrawn, they spake one to another, saying, This man doeth nothing
- 32 worthy of death or of bonds. And Agrippa said unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.

The speech of Tertullus is a delightful parody of the oratory of the second-rate Greek hired pleader; Luke must have enjoyed writing it. It begins with a high-flown compliment, and then quite suddenly subsides into the baldest colloquialism, as if the poor creature could not keep it up. Between vers. 6 and 8 something has dropped out, and surely the A.V. is here right against the R.V. in its conclusion of ver. 7, where the "Western" text reads: "And wished to judge him according to our law, but Lysias the tribune interfered, and with great violence took him out of our

¹ Or, *if*. Or, *whether*.

² Or, *is subject to suffering*.

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hands, and commanded his accusers to come before you. . . ." It is noteworthy that Tertullus is judiciously silent about the violence of the Jewish mob. For the use of the word "way" of the Christian life, compare ix. 2; the "Western" text omits "sect," and has "according to the 'way,' as they call it." The word is only found in this sense in passages connected with Paul (ix. 2; xix. 9, 23; xxii. 4; xxiv. 14, 22). Lake-Cadbury quote as parallels Taoism ("the way") and "Methodist!" It was probably of Jewish origin, and meant to imply that Christians were heretical; the "Western" reading here is very much to the point. In ver. 15 we have the only passage (except John v. 29) in the N.T. where a resurrection of "the unjust" is spoken of (cf. Luke xiv. 14; xx. 35 f.). Personally, I think that "the unjust" here has been added by a slip of the pen. The only kind of parallels are the parable of the sheep and the goats (Matt. xxv. 31 ff.) and Rev. xix., and in neither of these passages is the word "Resurrection" used of the wicked, though Rev. xx. 12 may be said to involve some kind of resurrection. At the beginning of ver. 20 Paul breaks off, as if the charge that he had defiled the Temple was too ridiculous for discussion. Ver. 21 does not imply that he thought himself to blame for his "one cry," but that he wished Felix to understand that the differences between him and his accusers were really theological, and therefore did not concern the Government at all. Felix decided to adjourn the case till Lysias was free to attend, and meanwhile to keep Paul in easy confinement. Drusilla (ver. 24) was the youngest daughter of Herod Agrippa I,

sister of Herod Agrippa II and Bernice. She had been formerly the wife of Aziz, king of Emesa, but had been persuaded by Atomos, a Cypriote magician, to leave her husband and live with Felix, who is said by Tacitus to have been the husband of "three queens." The "Western" text says the interview with Paul was arranged to please Drusilla, and this seems likely, as we are not told that Lysias had arrived. Evidently, Paul's discourse soon became rather personal, and Felix put him off again. Luke says slyly that during the next few weeks he kept seeing Paul "all the oftener" (ver. 26), because he hoped for a bribe. One's suspicion grows as one reads the story, that Paul was better off in these days than he used to be, when he worked with his own hands at Ephesus and Corinth. There is the suggestion made by his Jerusalem friends that he should pay the expenses of the four Nazarites, there is the hired house in Rome (xxviii. 30)—if that is a correct translation—and there is at least the suggestion here that he looked more or less prosperous. Had he come into money?

Festus arrived in the province in A.D. 57 and found Paul still in custody; Felix, says Luke—and here Tacitus bears him out—was an exceedingly corrupt governor, and "to ingratiate himself with the Jews," who were pressing serious charges against him in Rome, neither sent Paul to Rome, nor released him from prison. Festus found the province in a state of disorder, and before long visited Jerusalem. Here the Jews laid information against Paul again, and begged him to bring him to Jerusalem. When he got back to Cæsarea, he gave Paul the option of a trial in

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Jerusalem; he may well have thought that, as the alleged offence had been committed there, Jerusalem was the proper place to try it. But Paul refused, and claimed his right to be tried before the emperor himself. Herod Agrippa II, who was then the secular head of the Jewish Church, as well as tetrarch of Chalcis and Lysanias, came to Cæsarea with his sister Bernice (= Veronica) on a complimentary visit to Festus. This Agrippa had a bad character, and was strongly suspected of infamous relations with Bernice. Luke is obviously thinking how eager Herod Antipas had been to see Jesus (Luke ix. 9; xxiii. 8). The word translated "pomp" (xxv. 23) is still used in Palestine for a procession. Festus makes it plain that he is not asking Agrippa or the others for a verdict on Paul's innocence or guilt, but merely in order to get material for the emperor's information.

Paul seems pleased to have someone else than a Roman governor to talk to, and says so very eloquently (xxvi. 2). How his enforced silence for two years now must have fretted him! In this speech he really lets himself go, though he perhaps never had a less sympathetic audience to preach to! He makes much of the fact that for Pharisaic Jews to disbelieve in the Resurrection of Jesus was absurd, for the general resurrection was one of the main articles of their creed. In ver. 9 he turns to his own autobiography. It should be noticed that he does not say that he succeeded in making the disciples of Jesus blaspheme (ver. 11); the Greek means "tried to make them blaspheme." The words of Jesus at His conversion are given more fully here than in the other two

accounts in Acts; "it is hard for thee to kick against the goad" is a Greek proverb, and is found in Pindar and Aeschylus. It is interesting to find the risen Lord quoting a classical proverb to Saul, the classical scholar from Tarsus! Vers. 16 and 17 appear to contain a summary of what in the other two accounts of Paul's conversion (Acts ix. and xxii.) is spoken by Ananias and revealed by the Lord Himself in a vision (ix. 15; xxii. 14). Paul is to be a "minister and witness of the things which" he had "seen, and of the things in which" the risen Lord "will appear" to him—a somewhat clumsy phrase, reminding us of "Last of all, He appeared to me also" (1 Cor. xv. 8). In 1 Cor. iv. 1 also Paul speaks of himself as a "minister," and Luke uses the same word of those who "become ministers of the word" in Luke i. 2. Many scholars think that, from the very earliest days, Christian preachers carried about with them a collection of proof-texts selected from the O.T., and arranged under such headings as we find in ver. 23: "Can the Messiah suffer?" "Is he, first to rise from the dead, destined to proclaim light to the people (of Israel) and the Gentiles?" (cf. Luke ii. 32). But it must be confessed that the connexion with ver. 22 ("saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would happen") is awkward. So Nestle proposed to put in ver. 8 here, and read "Why is it judged incredible among you" (the Pharisees who were present) "that God raises dead men, if the Christ is to suffer?" etc. (between vers. 22 and 23). But it is not easy to see how the dislocation has come about, and, even in Nestle's rearrangement, the text does

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not read very smoothly. There is another strange phrase in ver. 18: "the faith that is in Me" (*i.e.* "Jesus"). That might mean "the faith I held," or "the faith that men have in Me"; perhaps "the faith that I brought into the world" covers both ideas. "Small and great" (ver. 22) probably generally means "young and old," but might mean "to all classes." In ver. 24 Blass thinks that the "Western" text originally ran: "you are mad, Paul, you are mad." Does Festus mean by "thy much learning" the learning he had displayed in his speech—which is probably only a summary; hence its many obscurities—or the many MSS. which he happened to know the prisoner possessed? Probably the former (cf. John vii. 15—"How does this man know so much about theology, never having been to college?"). "Truth and soberness" (ver. 25) should be rendered "sober truth." "Done in a corner" (ver. 26) is another classical expression; it occurs, *e.g.*, in Plato. A translation different from A.V. and R.V. has been already suggested (Introduction, § 4); "in short," says Agrippa, "you are trying to persuade me to act Christian!" "The short and the long of it is," answers Paul, "I wish that you and all who listen to me to-day could be as I am—but not in the dock!" In any case, it is clear that Agrippa is not "almost persuaded," but is anxious to discourage Paul's manifest tendency to rush him into agreement with him (Paul). With this exchange and comments by Festus and Agrippa, both acquitting Paul of any crime but wrong-headedness, the chapter closes.

§ 16. *The Journey to Rome* (Chaps. 27-28)

Rome at Last

1 AND when it was determined that we should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners to a
2 centurion named Julius, of the Augustan ¹ band. And embarking in a ship of Adramyttium, which was about to sail unto the places on the coast of Asia, we put to sea, Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with
3 us. And the next day we touched at Sidon: and Julius treated Paul kindly, and gave him leave to go unto his
4 friends and ² refresh himself. And putting to sea from thence, we sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the winds
5 were contrary. And when we had sailed across the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, *a city* of
6 Lycia. And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria
7 sailing for Italy; and he put us therein. And when we had sailed slowly many days, and were come with difficulty over against Cnidus, the wind not ³ further suffering us, we
8 sailed under the lee of Crete, over against Salmone: and with difficulty coasting along it we came unto a certain place called Fair Havens: nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.

9 And when much time was spent, and the voyage was now dangerous, because the Fast was now already gone by,
10 Paul admonished them, and said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not
11 only of the lading and the ship, but also of our lives. But the centurion gave more heed to the master and to the owner of the ship, than to those things which were spoken by
12 Paul. And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to put to sea from thence, if by any means they could reach Phoenix, and winter *there*; *which is* a haven of Crete, looking ⁴ north-east and south-

¹ Or, *cohort*.

² Gr. *receive attention*.

³ Or, *suffering us to get there*.

⁴ Gr. *down the south-west wind and down the north-west wind*.

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13 east. And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that
they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor and
14 sailed along Crete, close in shore. But after no long time
there beat down from it a tempestuous wind, which is called
15 Euraquilo: and when the ship was caught, and could not
16 face the wind, we gave way *to it*, and were driven. And
running under the lee of a small island called ¹ Cauda, we
17 were able, with difficulty, to secure the boat: and when they
had hoisted it up, they used helps, under-girding the ship;
and, fearing lest they should be cast upon the Syrtis, they
18 lowered the gear, and so were driven. And as we laboured
exceedingly with the storm, the next day they began to
19 throw *the freight* overboard; and the third day they cast
20 out with their own hands the ² tackling of the ship. And
when neither sun nor stars shone upon *us* for many days,
and no small tempest lay on *us*, all hope that we should be
21 saved was now taken away. And when they had been long
without food, then Paul stood forth in the midst of them,
and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not
have set sail from Crete, and have gotten this injury and
22 loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there
shall be no loss of life among you, but *only* of the ship.
23 For there stood by me this night an angel of the God
24 whose I am, whom also I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul:
thou must stand before Cæsar: and lo, God hath granted
25 thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of
good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even so as it
26 hath been spoken unto me. Howbeit we must be cast upon
a certain island.
27 But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were
driven to and fro in the *sea of Adria*, about midnight the
sailors surmised that they were drawing near to some
28 country; and they sounded, and found twenty fathoms:
and after a little space, they sounded again, and found
29 fifteen fathoms. And fearing lest haply we should be cast
ashore on rocky ground, they let go four anchors from the

¹ Many ancient authorities read *Clauda*.

² Or, *furniture*.

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30 stern, and ¹ wished for the day. And as the sailors were seeking to flee out of the ship, and had lowered the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would lay out
31 anchors from the foreship, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot
32 be saved. Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the boat,
33 and let her fall off. And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take some food, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye wait and continue fasting,
34 having taken nothing. Wherefore I beseech you to take some food: for this is for your safety: for there shall not a
35 hair perish from the head of any of you. And when he had said this, and had taken bread, he gave thanks to God in
36 the presence of all: and he brake it, and began to eat. Then were they all of good cheer, and themselves also took
37 food. And we were in all in the ship ² two hundred three-
38 score and sixteen souls. And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the
39 sea. And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they perceived a certain bay with a beach, and they took
40 counsel whether they could ³ drive the ship upon it. And casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea, at the same time loosing the bands of the rudders; and hoisting
41 up the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach. But lighting upon a place where two seas met, they ran the vessel aground; and the foreship struck and remained unmoveable, but the stern began to break up by the violence
42 *of the waves*. And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any *of them* should swim out, and escape.
43 But the centurion, desiring to save Paul, stayed them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves overboard, and get first to
44 the land: and the rest, some on planks, and some on *other* things from the ship. And so it came to pass, that they all escaped safe to the land.

¹ Or, *prayed*.

² Some ancient authorities read *about three-score and sixteen souls*.

³ Some ancient authorities read *bring the ship safe to shore*.

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- 1 And when we were escaped, then we knew that the
2 island was called ¹ Melita. And the barbarians shewed us
no common kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received
us all, because of the present rain, and because of the
3 cold. But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and
laid them on the fire, a viper came out ² by reason of the
4 heat, and fastened on his hand. And when the barbarians
saw the beast hanging from his hand, they said one to
another, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though
he hath escaped from the sea, yet Justice hath not suffered
5 to live. Howbeit he shook off the beast into the fire, and
6 took no harm. But they expected that he would have
swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but when they were
long in expectation, and beheld nothing amiss come to him,
they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.
- 7 Now in the neighbourhood of that place were lands
belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius;
who received us, and entertained us three days courteously.
8 And it was so, that the father of Publius lay sick of fever
and dysentery: unto whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and
9 laying his hands on him healed him. And when this was
done, the rest also which had diseases in the island came, and
10 were cured: who also honoured us with many honours; and
when we sailed, they put on board such things as we needed.
- 11 And after three months we set sail in a ship of Alexandria,
which had wintered in the island, whose sign was ³ The
12 Twin Brothers. And touching at Syracuse, we tarried
13 there three days. And from thence we ⁴ made a circuit,
and arrived at Rhegium: and after one day a south wind
14 sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli; where
we found brethren, and were intreated to tarry with them
15 seven days: and so we came to Rome. And from thence
the brethren, when they heard of us, came to meet us as
far as The Market of Appius, and The Three Taverns:
whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

¹ Some ancient authorities read *Melitene*.

² Or, *from the heat*.

⁴ Some ancient authorities read *cast loose*.

³ *Gr. Dioscuri*.

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- 16 And when we entered into Rome, ¹ Paul was suffered to abide by himself with the soldier that guarded him.
- 17 And it came to pass, that after three days he called together ² those that were the chief of the Jews: and when they were come together, he said unto them, I, brethren, though I had done nothing against the people, or the customs of our fathers, yet was delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the
- 18 hands of the Romans: who, when they had examined me, 19 desired to set me at liberty, because there was no cause of death in me. But when the Jews spake against it, I was
- 20 constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had aught to accuse my nation of. For this cause therefore did I ³ intreat you to see and to speak with *me*: for because of the hope
- 21 of Israel I am bound with this chain. And they said unto him, We neither received letters from Judæa concerning thee, nor did any of the brethren come hither and report or
- 22 speak any harm of thee. But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, it is known to us that everywhere it is spoken against.
- 23 And when they had appointed him a day, they came to him into his lodging in great number; to whom he expounded *the matter*, testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening.
- 24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some 25 disbelieved. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word. Well spake the Holy Ghost ⁴ by Isaiah the prophet unto your
- 26 fathers, saying,
Go thou unto this people, and say,
By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand;
And seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive:
- 27 For this people's heart is waxed gross,

¹ Some ancient authorities insert *the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the prætorian guard: but.*

² Or, *those that were of the Jews first.*

³ Or, *call for you, to see and to speak with you.*

⁴ Or, *through.*

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And their ears are dull of hearing,
And their eyes they have closed;
Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes,
And hear with their ears,
And understand with their heart,
And should turn again,
And I should heal them.

28 Be it known therefore unto you, that this salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles: they will also hear.¹

30 And he abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling,

31 and received all that went in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him.

At last Paul's long-cherished dream—to see Rome—is to be fulfilled, though he is to get there as a prisoner. There is good evidence that there was an "Augustan cohort" stationed in Syria in the first century A.D. In ver. 2 we should translate "to sail, calling on its way at the ports on the coast of Asia." Adramyttium was in Mysia in the northern part of that province. Sidon (ver. 3) was distant from Cæsarea sixty-nine sea-miles; here Julius treated Paul with consideration, and allowed him to visit his friends; Blass (on the strength of his reconstruction of the "Western" text) thought we should read "allowed his friends to visit him"—this seems more likely. The prevailing winds in the summer in the Levant are N.W., directly contrary to a straight course from Sidon to Myra. So they "sailed under the lee of Cyprus"—notice the "we" has appeared again, for Luke has finished his two years' stay in Palestine and has now rejoined Paul. Then

¹ Some ancient authorities insert ver. 29, *And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, having much disputing among themselves.*

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a favourable shift of wind enabled them to make a dart across "the open sea" to the coast of Asia Minor. At Myra (see note on xxi. 1—"Western" text) they changed boats, embarking on an Alexandrian boat for Italy. Then for several days "we" (ver. 7) "worked slowly to windward, and with some difficulty drew abreast of Cnidus; then, since we found that the wind did not allow us to hold on our course any further, we sailed under the lee of Crete, only just avoiding the rocks round Cape Salmone. So we beat up along the coast till we came to a place called 'Fair Havens.' . . ." In ver. 9 "the Fast" is the Day of Atonement, about the 5th of October that year. A better translation of "admonished" (ver. 10) would be "made a suggestion." As a matter of fact there was no loss of life in the shipwreck. In ver. 11 we should render "the man at the helm and the captain," and in ver. 12 "hoping by hook or by crook to get to Phoenice and pass the winter there." As to the position of Phoenice the A.V. and R.V. differ; A.V. has "faces N.W. and S.W." (so Ramsay), the R.V. "N.E. and S.E." Phoenice has been identified with Phineka, which does look S.W. and N.W. Others identify with Lutro (N.E. and S.E.); the actual phrase in the Greek is: "looking down the N.W. and S.W. wind." "When a moderate south wind blew, they thought they had made sure of their purpose, and coasted along the shore of Crete, keeping rather close in shore." "Euraquilo"—not "Euroclydon"—is probably the correct reading in ver. 14—it is an east-north-easter or north-easter; rushing down from Mount Ida in

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Crete, it would drive them towards the dreaded whirlpool ("the Syrtis") off the north coast of Africa (ver. 17). "As we could not stand up to the wind, we let her fall off, and drove before it . . . with great difficulty we got the dinghy alongside" (ver. 16)—the difficulty was to avoid it being stove in against the ship—"and after the crew had hauled it on board, they frapped the ship with supporting cables" (this has been done, I understand, in comparatively modern times; a cable is passed round the ship several times and made taut, to ease the strain and prevent the timbers working and the seams opening); "lowered the gear" means "shortened sail." "We were still making heavy weather of it (ver. 18) when on the next day the sailors began to jettison the cargo, and the day after that, with their own hands they tore away the spare gear. For several more days the storm raged violently, neither sun nor stars being visible, and all hope of being saved was slipping away. No one had had anything to eat for a long time, when Paul" made his speech, telling crew and passengers alike that God had assured him in a vision overnight that they would all be saved for his sake, but only after they had been "marooned on an island." "We were still drifting about in the Adriatic," Luke goes on, "on the fourteenth night, when in the middle of the night the sailors suspected that they were getting near land; there is a still more vivid reading at the end of ver. 27—it is "thought that they could hear the sound of breakers on the shore." There is no difficulty about the Mediterranean south of Italy being called "the Adriatic," for Pausanias speaks of the

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Straits of Messina as "uniting the Adriatic and Tyrrhene seas." "So" (ver. 28) "they dropped the fathoming line . . ." "and after a little while dropped it again . . . they were afraid that they might drift upon the rocks, so they let down four anchors from the stern"—to act as a brake—"and spent their time in praying for day. The sailors were caught trying to escape, and lowering the dinghy on the pretence that they were going to let anchors down from the prow." Paul stopped this manœuvre in time, and the soldiers "cut the falls of the dinghy and set her adrift." Then Paul took command of the situation, urging crew and passengers to have a meal; "no hair of your head shall be lost" is a proverbial Jewish expression (cf. 1 Sam. xiv. 45; 2 Sam. xiv. 11; 1 Kings i. 52; Luke xxi. 18). It would appear, as the *Beginnings of Christianity* (vol. iv., p. 336) suggests, that the cutting away of the dinghy was the cause of the shipwreck. With anchors to check their drift, all they needed to do was to wait for the storm to abate, and then row quietly ashore in the dinghy. In ver. 37 we should probably read, with the Vatican Codex, "about 76" for "276"—the latter seems an impossibly large number. It is doubtful whether Luke would have counted the numbers on the boat, and it is in his manner to qualify his estimates with the word "about" (cf. Acts ii. 41; v. 36; xix. 7), even when the numbers were small. By a slight change in the Greek J. C. Naber altered "wheat" (ver. 38) into "main mast," arguing that the cargo had already been jettisoned in ver. 18. Perhaps Luke means that, having had their meal, they disposed of the rest of

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their provisions; but surely the sacrifice of stores would not have lightened the ship very much; Lake-Cadbury suggest that it was to ensure that the ship should draw as little water as possible, and so run aground well up the beach. "They little by little made out a bay with a strand" (ver. 39) "on which they hoped, if they could, to beach the ship. So they cut the cables, and left the anchors in the sea, at the same time unleashing the steering-paddles, and hoisting the foresail to the wind, they were making on the beach." The long steering-oars which projected through portholes at the stern—on each side of the ship, would be hauled up on board when it was anchored, to prevent fouling the cables, and dashing against the sides; when they were about to get under weigh, the lashings would be cast off, and they would be thrust through the portholes. "At the same time" is a very accurate touch, for it had to be done at the earliest possible moment, to secure immediate control of the vessel; but it could not be done before the cables were cut, for fear of fouling them. "Striking against a spit of land which projected where the two seas met, they ran her heavily aground; the prow was embedded in the sand . . . while the stern was being broken up by the force of the sea." The soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners, but Julius, who had learned to respect Paul—and no wonder!—would have none of it, and gave orders that those who could swim should take to the water, "the rest, some on planks, others precariously clinging to broken pieces of the ship," or perhaps "on the backs of members of the crew" (Zorell)—there is a

delicate turn of phrase in the Greek here—also got safely to the land. We wish Luke had told us whether Paul swam ashore or reached it in the less dignified manner.

Rome at Last

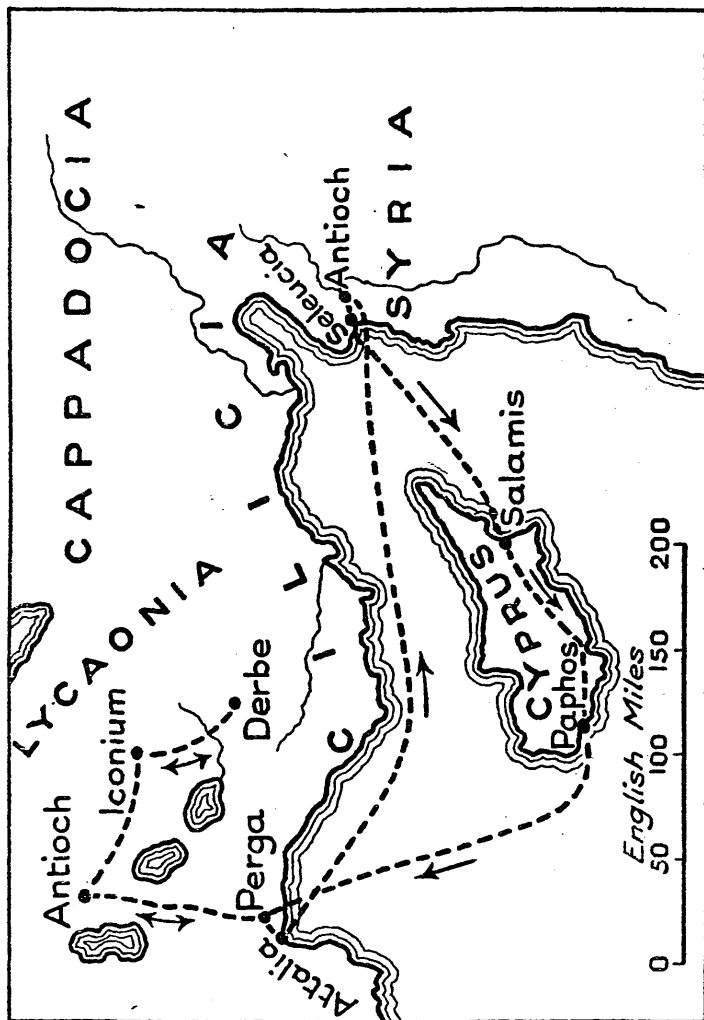
We are glad that Luke managed to save his precious manuscripts. The island was Malta; curiously enough this (Phœnician) word means "escape"; Dr Rendel Harris thought (*Expos. Times*, xxi. (1909)) that Luke knew this; "we recognised that the island deserved its name." We should translate "barbarians" (ver. 2) "natives"—the Greeks called all non-Greeks "barbarians," as Jews called all non-Jews "Gentiles." They made a bonfire "because of the rainstorm which had set in and the cold." Characteristically enough, Paul, who must always be doing, was helping to gather sticks, when a viper darted out and fastened on his hand. The natives thought that this was a judgement; was he dressed as a prisoner? Doubtless they did not call "Justice" by her Greek name—they thought of her as a goddess—but by some Semitic name which Luke translates. When they see nothing "happening" they come to the conclusion that he was a god, like the people of Lystra. Inscriptions prove that "the chief of the island" was the title of its Roman governor; another instance of Luke's accuracy in local nomenclature, like that of the "politarchs" at Thessalonica. Publius—for that was his name—was suffering from gastric fever and dysentery; Paul laid his hands on him, and

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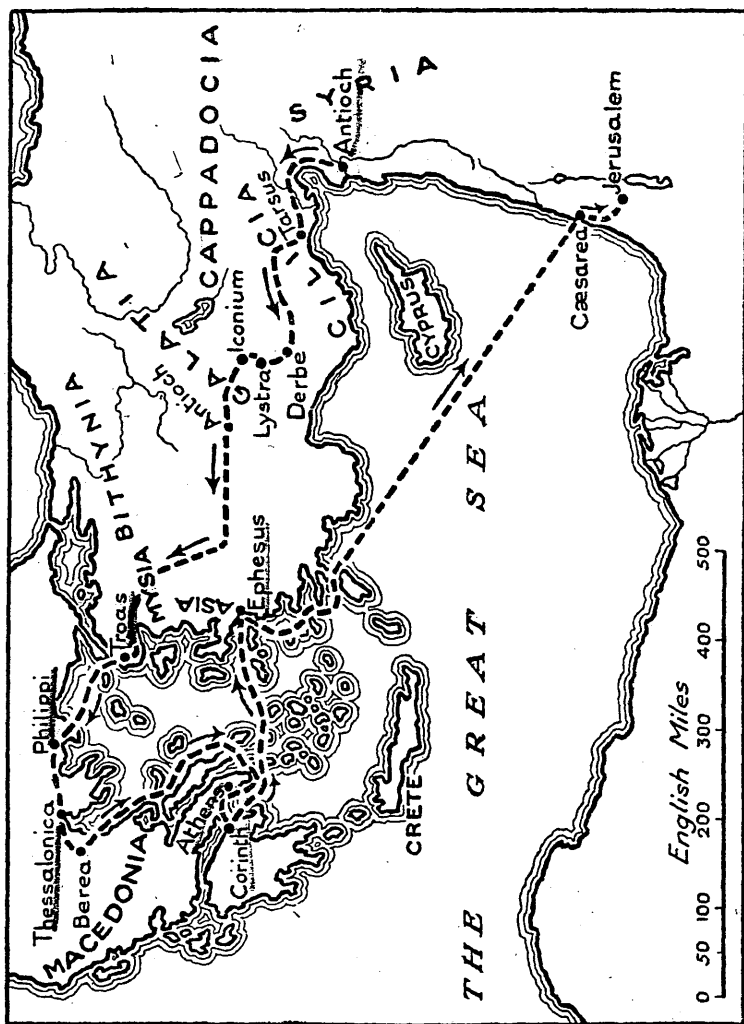
Luke also distinguished himself by treating local invalids (ver. 9). "Honoured" us with many honours" might mean "paid us large fees," but this does not seem likely from our knowledge of Paul's character. However, when sailing became possible again—February 7, says Pliny—grateful patients were allowed to provision the boat. The figurehead of the boat was "the heavenly twins" (Castor and Pollux)—they were, of course, regarded as patrons of navigation. "Sailing round" in ver. 12 is a very accurate description; everybody who has been through the Straits of Messina knows at what a sharp angle the boat has to turn to get through them. In ver. 14 we should translate "from Puteoli we headed straight for Rome." They did not reach Rome just yet, but they were on the last lap, on the road which led direct to the eternal city. In ver. 18 the "Western" text has "after a long examination"—it had, as a matter of fact, lasted two years. Is "the chain" of ver. 20 metaphorical? It seems strange that the Jews in Rome could profess that they had heard no evil of Paul, when we consider how very active his Jewish opponents were everywhere else. In any case, Paul invited them to come to his lodging, and preached a long sermon to them on the "Kingdom of God." His audience was divided as usual, and as usual Paul had the last word. It is interesting to notice that here Luke gives at full length the prophecy from Isaiah which, in Luke viii. 10, he had dropped—the other Synoptic Gospels go on with it in that place. Perhaps he reserved it to the end, as summing up one of the main themes of his books; the Jews had rejected the message, and so it

became available for the Gentiles (compare Paul's explanation of the same amazing fact in Rom. ix.—xi.). Gentiles would never have come in to a *Jewish* Church in large numbers, so the Jews had to make way for the time to let them in, but only in order that, "when the full tide of the Gentiles" had come in, the Jews, feeling themselves out of it, would enter too, and that would be indeed "life from the dead." According to the "Western" text of ver. 16, Paul was put in charge of the "prefect of the emperor's bodyguard," who had the care of political prisoners from the provinces. He was allowed to live in lodgings of his own choice, and maintain himself by his earnings, preaching to all comers without let or hindrance. So, effectively indeed, but with surprising abruptness, the "Acts" comes to an end.

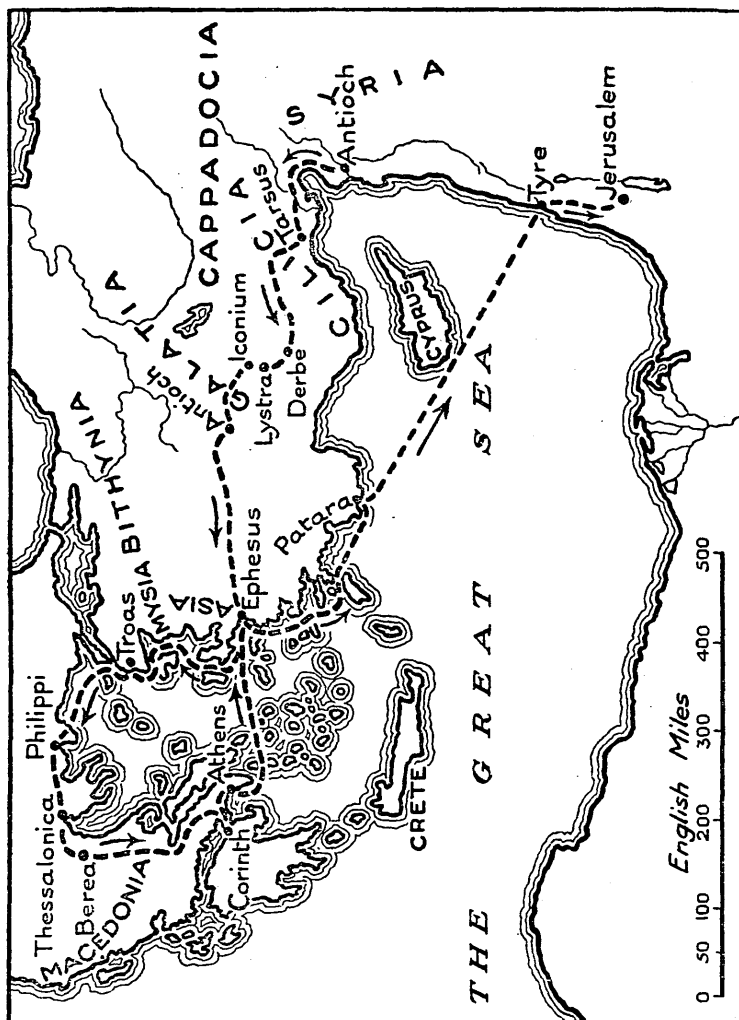
So the author finishes his great task; he has bridged the gap between Gospels and Epistles, Jesus and Paul, Jerusalem and Rome, and his book has become at once the link that binds the New Testament into one and that avenue by which we can pass, by a natural transition, from the little company of disciples who gathered round Jesus to the Catholic Church.



ST PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY



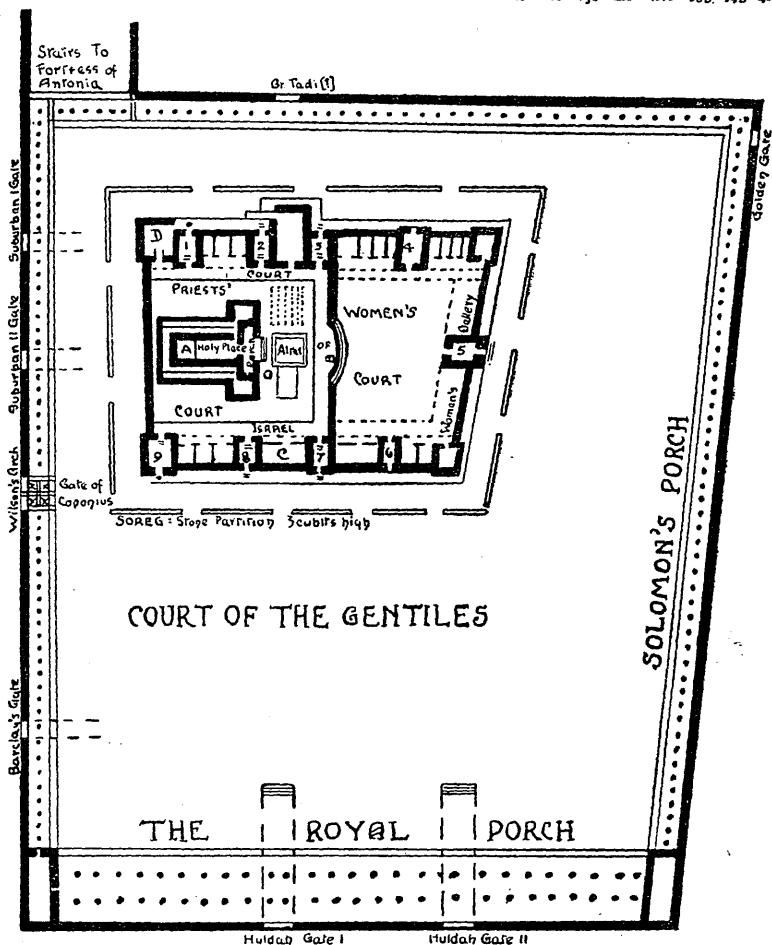
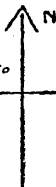
ST PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY



ST PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY

HEROD'S TEMPLE

Cubits 20 40 60 80 100 120 140 160 180 200 220 240 260 280 300
Feet 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 110 120 130 140 150 160 170 180 190 200 210 220 230 240 250 260 270 280 290 300 310 320 330 340 350 360 370 380 390 400 410 420 430 440 450



A = Holy of Holies. O = The Laver.

1-9 = Gates of the Sanctuary: 1, HOUSE MOVED; 2, CORBAN; 3, NITSUS; 4, NIKANOR or BEAUTIFUL; 5, WATER; 6, FIRST-BORN; 7, FUEL.

B = The Upper Gate.

C = Chamber Gazith.

D = Guardhouse Moved.

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